

Theatre Australia

Venetian Twins

Australian Opera
Troubles

MTC Head
Interviewed

Jim Cairns on the
Whitlam Show

Barry Oakley

**MTC'S
BETRAYAL**

**ROCK &
THEATRE**

NIMROD

500 Elizabeth Street
Surry Hills NSW 2010 (02) 699 5003

Nimrod at Sydney Opera House
Until Saturday 1 December

THE VENETIAN TWINS

by Nick Enright and Tazewell Clarke
from the play by Carlo Goldoni
director John Bell designer Stephen Curtis

Valerie Bader, Anne Byrne, John Ewing,
Drew Forsythe, John Frawley, Barry Lovett,
Jennifer McGeoghegan, John McTernan, Tony Sheldon,
Tony Taylor

Nimrod Upstairs
Until Sunday 18 November
Melbourne Theatre Company in

BETRAYAL

Heinrich Pinter
director John Sumner
designer Tampa McCallie

Elizabeth Alexander, Ned Figgpatrick, Edward Hoople,
John Stanton

Nimrod at the Athenaeum Melbourne
Until Saturday 15 December

TRAVELLING NORTH

David Williamson
director John Bell
designer Ian Robinson

Jennifer Hagen, Julie Hamilton, Anthony Ingram,
Deborah Kennedy, Carol Rye, Graham Rowe,
Helen Sorpe, Frank Wilson

Nimrod Downstairs
Until Sunday 11 November

NOT I
Samuel Beckett

**VICHI MADISON
CLOCKS OUT**

Alex Bara

**POTIPHAR'S
WIFE**

Margot Hilton

director Ken Horler
designers Neil Simpson, Sally Torane, Lindy Ward,
Julie McGeoghegan, Helen Morse

Nimrod Upstairs
From Wednesday 28 November
The NIDA/Jane Street Theatre Production

ON OUR SELECTION

Stuart Hoad/Bert Bailey
director George Whalley designer Ken Carpenter

Ian Blake, John Clayton, Roma Conway,
Don Crosby, Vivienne Gerratt, Roni Haskinart,
John Howard, Robert Menzies, Julianne Newbould,
Barry Otto, Geoffrey Rush, John Smythe,
Kerry Walker



**SINGAPORE
AIRLINES**

A great way to fly

Theatre Australia

NOVEMBER 1979 VOLUME 4 NO. 4

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COMMENT

The two weeks over the end of September beginning of October, saw a meeting in every state of at least one, sometimes performing arts companies. The aim was to discuss the setting up of a central service organisation for these companies. Bob Adams of the Australian Council Theatre Board had several events attend the meetings Peter Ziesler, Director of the American organisation Theatre Communications Group, Ziesler was there, not to promote a format for Australia, but to talk about TCG and similar ideas.

TCG has a membership of the 200-odd subsidised performing arts companies in the US, and is run from New York by a staff of loanseers. It provides a vast range of services, one in personnel services - casting, auditioning, keeping central files on actors, directors and designers. As in many suggests, a dissemination of all sorts of information through newsletters and publications, from plays to a managers' bulletin, a companies' annuaries and conferences and has touring, subscription and fund-raising services. A new political wing called the American Arts Alliance makes it its function to educate and lobby the public and the government about the performing arts, and it has successfully helped legislation to help this.

It all sounds very impressive, but the question is, how can such an organisation work in Australia?

Peter Ziesler, although he very properly would make no recommendations after only two weeks in the country, felt that the American personnel services would be inappropriate in Australia because of the comparative smallness of the profession. But he did think that communication, among the profession was desperately needed - probably in an interdisciplinary way.

Some obvious areas where the tentatively named ADAPT - Association for the Development of Australian Professional Theatre - could be of enormous value, would be in lobbying governments for increased funds, and working on the private sector to move towards the American notion of heavy arts funding. More frequent meetings and collaboration between different companies could undoubtedly be of mutual benefit and increased intercompany touring would be stimulating to companies and audiences alike.

But there are obvious pitfalls, one of which would be to duplicate existing services. For example, who, from the

Theatre Board need to integrate an organisation to lobby the Theatre Board? We have in ARTS 1 named a company specifically set up to act as a go-between for the business and arts worlds. The Elizabethan Theatre Trust is still in the process of setting up an exchange scheme between Australian and international theatre companies. There are organisations such as the Australian Council or Theatre Australia which are already in some cases central resource centres. And the Playwrights Conference provides a Theatre Forum every year.

However ADAPT itself up a well have to find a way of bringing these separate things, or of bringing them together for the benefit of the companies.

There is a worry too, that in a country as small as Australia the performing arts companies might be too disparate and even too competitive to find that coming together in this way is helpful or desirable. As yet no specific recommendations have come from the potential participants, the next step is a meeting of all together in Canberra, to discuss the what, where, who, how, where and why of ADAPT.

The Elizabethan Theatre Trust is seeking the advice of Patrick Donnelly, retired manager of the Royal Shakespeare Company, as to its own future. Perhaps it could become a more integrated centre of operations by housing and working with such a central service organisation as, hopefully, ADAPT might be.



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I N F O

TOWARDS THE 21ST CENTURY Richard Wherrett on the first season of the Sydney Theatre Company

"Theatre must exist in the present tense, but it seems right that a theatre company, born at the start of the new decade looks forward to its nature at the start of the new century. The aims and policies upon which we are based now, hopefully will see us thriving when we turn 21 in the year 2000.

On the positive side, we aim to provide first class theatrical entertainment for the people of Sydney. There is a grand vulgar intelligence, challenging and fun, to develop the quality of Australian theatre in both the standard of writing and the standard of production, to establish a theatre company that is light, flexible, committed, spirited and interesting, to provide the highest quality of theatre in the lowest possible price, to discover and develop new and

different forms of theatrical expression, and to discover and develop new audiences.

The plays produced will be chosen in terms of their relevance to our contemporary society and will come from the best of Australian writing, both new and old, the best contemporary writing from abroad, and the classics of dramatic literature which provide the discipline against which the new work is measured.

In the present time, so an Sydney Theatre Company's first season of its own productions opens on January 1, 1980 I am delighted that this will be a production of George Bernard Shaw's *Man and Superman*, which, apart from its title, has the added charm that it was written in Australia almost exactly 100 years ago and was first performed in Sydney, as was also then also called the Sydney Opera House. This will be the first revival at what I hope will be many Australian theatres aiming to establish an

Australian repertoire, by looking to the past as their light on the present.

There will however also be two new works from local authors, as well as one from England. A major Shakespeare and a major French classic, neither of which I can remember having professional

productions here, complete the season. That it is 50% Australian and 50% foreign, and that it is 50% contemporary and 50% classic makes for a good balance I think. It has been very exciting to see a choice from the heady beginnings as I pursued the whole history of dramatic literature.

As I write this a number of actors have already been contacted. I am very pleased that the actors will include Ruth Cracknell, John Bell, Frank Thring, John Lauder, Geraldine Turner, Peter Curran, John Hargreaves, Lyn Curran, Jennifer Hagan and Mel Gibson. That the directors will include George Ogilvie, Rodney Fisher and Mick Rogers, and that the designers will include Kris Fredrickson, Iona Arrighi, Ian Robinson and Nicky Fletcher. And there will be a germanic company of eight actors, which will give, in 12 or 14 I hope, when we require in addition a second voice."



Richard Wherrett

NEW SEASONS Theatre companies are now beginning to announce their 1980 seasons. The plans of the Sydney Theatre Company had to be kept under wraps until the press conference a few days after the main appearance. Richard Wherrett's comments show the general trend.

The SA State Theatre Company's first season with Colin George, for the Adelaide Festival he will direct his four-hour adaptation of the *Walden* Mystery Cycle, after which the Artistic Director designates Kevin Palmer will direct Alan Seymour's classic *The One Day Of The Year*, and it will go on a state-wide tour. Chalken's *Three Girls* follows, with Palmer and George co-directing and the latter making his Adelaide stage debut as Verboten. Then comes another Alan Seymour, a world

premiere *The Film* about a mythical creature called Parnalia which suffers a similar day in Australia's 11 November 1975. Nick Knight is putting together another musical this time a documentary on the 60's called *On The Water*, which will end the season.

Norwood also has a mixture of classic and Australian plays. His homegrown chick, Steven Scaeff's *Prisoners*, directed by Neil Armfield, is in *Prisoners* at the start on Clarke Island in January and *Love's Labour's Lost*. John Bell is taking on the classics with the *Oryzoid* trilogy and the co-direction with Armfield of *Edipus* in which he also takes the role role.

It's good to see the swing towards a 50% Australian content and a move away from the idea that one light English comedy per season is compulsory for box office.



Colin George

THE SUCCESSION TO COLIN GEORGE at the State Theatre Company of SA has finally been announced: from July 1980 Kevin Palmer will be the company's Artistic Director, with Nick Bourke as his Associate Director. The two haven't yet had time to decide on a policy or a programme for next year, in fact with Colin George presently in England for two months there's had something of a malaise, with Nick Bourke directing *Toys* by Anouk and Kevin Palmer *Afternoon* by Shaw.

Palmer says they are both delighted to be given the chance of continuing to run the company and feels that their appointments show the Board's desire to maintain standards and the present company structure. "I like Richard Wharmby's appointment: those at South and myself share that theatre boards are now having the courage to appoint Australians. We will certainly be continuing the promotion of Australian plays that Colin has started and we also hope it



Kevin Palmer

is economically possible to start the company performing in a smaller space as well as the Playhouse. This wouldn't put us far from modern alternative theatres, but also for alternative ways of playing the classics."

They will be announcing their first season (the SAC's second season of 1980) early next year.



Paul Hey

ENGLAND IN THE CLUB, Normand's third production, after *Platonov* and *Christmas Works*, in four seasons will be Williamson's *The Club*. John Bell's production with all six of the original cast: Jeff Ashby, Drew Harwith, Ben Graham, Ron Haddock, Ian Rams and Barry Lovejoy will be running for six weeks at London's Hampstead Theatre from January 18 next year. It is a well-known theatre producing mainly new British plays and has many West End transfers to

its credit. It's hoped *The Club* adds to the list.

Normand's General Manager Paul Hey said Normand was very grateful for the sponsorship of Singapore Airlines, a special project grant of \$20,000 from the International Program of the Australian Council and a grant from the NSW Government. Apparently negotiations for this tour have been under wraps for four months.

Mr Hey also said "Mr R J Flanagan, Manager for Home Affairs and the Arts, attended a company meeting at Normand in October to tell us all about the terrific future of the Elizabethan Theatre Trust in its second quarter century. Mr Flanagan had in September announced the appointment of William Mortley as an entrepreneur to exchange Australian theatre companies with the best (or worst) of foreign theatre companies. The Australia Council has funded William Mortley's current night-week overseas tour to set up exchanges for 1981. We are very grateful to Mr Flanagan for organising our tour."

THE ADRIANNE LEE-FESTIVAL is having great success with the "American style" campaign it has waged for sponsors. They have BP helping them to bring the *Kammerspiele Oper* to the Festival from East Berlin. The company includes an opera and ballet company and it is the latter who will be appearing on their first visit to Australia. The *Kammerspiele Oper* is one of the most advanced and interesting in the world, especially celebrated for their stunning visual and technical effects. The company's visit will be a rare event: they have hardly ever been seen outside their own theatre in Berlin.

The Peter Youngs Foundation have handed over a cheque for \$10,000 to the Festival to sponsor the State Opera's production of Strauss's *Die Frau ohne Schatten*. The old Paris Theatre team is working on a film Sherman doubts Brian Thompson is designing and

James Wright has designed over 100 costumes. Merv Friedman will be conducting Robert Dard and Tom Mulholland in the lead roles.

Other sponsors for the Festival are Kodak for an inaugural audio-visual programme called the Festival Show which is seen by potential audiences as well as people who have never had a chance to experience the Festival.

The Festival Plaza Centre will be transformed to become the living heart of the Festival City during the operation three weeks through the sponsorship of the State Government Insurance Commission. Apparently it will hold all sorts of entertainment, eating, drinking and relaxing facilities.

And perhaps the most appropriate of all is Melbourne's sponsorship of the South Theatre which will be given full control to children's programmes for the whole Festival.



Jon Marston Photo Director

I N F O

MUSIC BOON STARTS
 Music, Bos, Theatre
 Under the direction of
 Lucy O'Connell is one of the
 projects funded by a Limited Life
 Grant from the Theatre Board
 this financial year and perform four
 small-scale musicals over the next
 year. As music plays such a major
 part in the project, the Music
 Board have also contributed a
 substantial amount of the grant.
 All four initial productions will
 go on Downstairs at the Seymour
 Centre, with the first production
Sweeney opening on 18
 November.

Sweeney was first performed at
 a much shortened version at a
 late show by the Riverside
 Trunking Company, and is
 about a group of young rangers
 during WW2. According to
 co-ordinator Glen Hale, "It has
 a score of songs composed
 by Ken Medhurst, Lucy
 O'Connell, Muler O'Meara and
 our musical director Debra
 Woodin. Nancie Hayes is
 choreographing, the designer is
 Anthony Babcock and we have a
 marvellous group of musicians
 the Music, Arts Orchestra.
 We are into pre-production
 work on the second show
 already. It is set in Sweden



Sweeney rehearsal. Choreographer Nancie Hayes with cast Jill Flood, Lucy Charles May, Peter and Ken Hardwick. Photo Christine Lemke

during the depression at the
 1930's and the cast includes Rob
 Baines, Vincent Garrett and
 Toby Penrice.

"It's a most exciting

experiment for all of us and we
 are hopeful that we can attract
 good audiences during our
 short seasons at the Seymour.
 so yes, the results of our work

interest is very high and we are
 receiving valuable assistance
 from many people especially
 the Theatre Workshop of
 Sydney University."

NITE LOHAS MARIAN
 STREET THEATRE Kallara
 gives each something of a bath
 has had a wonderful high flying
 comments.

\$450,000 ensures a splendid
 bloom for the Marian Street
 Theatre to open our 1988
 season 500,000 cars from the
 State Government, the rest
 from a caring and appreciative
 closely 40-40-40-40 Council
 which accepts responsibility for
 their building and recognizes
 the community asset of 15 years
 growth in audience, support and
 the consistent critical acclaim
 for quality productions.

"The massive restoration
 project was prompted by a
 Department of Services Order
 which insisted that the
 inadequate workshop and fire

safety facilities must be replaced
 and upgraded.

"Now, in addition, the
 auditorium will be extended to
 accommodate another 80 (in
 1991) seats, the foyer and
 restaurant enlarged and the
 results given a welcome elegant
 face-lift.

"All funds named at the
 September "Free Marian" will
 put the vital workshop
 finishing touches on the
 programme.

"Season one November
 December musical will play
 while the exterior work is in
 progress. Our January
 children's show will, of
 necessity, be performed outside
 and the complete new back
 theatre will be open with in
 April. Inevitably, show has
 the best possible cause."

MONEY, MONEY
 MONEY Publish-

ers Edward Arnold
 two months brought out a
 book called *The Economy: 19
 The Performance Art* by C. D.
 Thorns and G. A. Waters. It
 focuses on live and professional
 performing arts as flourishing
 in recent years, and the growing
 financial pressures and cost of
 the arts to the public purse.

In their book, *Days of
 Thorns and Green Waters*,
 provide an extensive examina-
 tion of the contribution that
 can be made by economic
 analysis to an understanding of
 the position of the performing
 arts in modern society.
 Drawing on experience from
 Australia, Britain, Canada,
 New Zealand and America, the
 book also explores the impact on

the behaviour of arts man-
 consumers and patrons.

The case for government
 support is thoroughly reviewed
 and levels and forms of public
 assistance are considered in
 depth. Their preface states:
 "While this is a strict scholarly
 book that explores problems
 there is nevertheless much in
 Thorns and Waters that
 challenges conventional
 wisdom on the performing
 arts."

As one who is very much in
 the thick of and at the top of
 this area in Australia we have
 asked Paul Day at the Arnold
 to review *The Economy: 19
 The Performance Art* and his
 reply to the challenge will
 appear in the January issue.

DANCING ROUND THE WORLD: Two dance companies are recently home after very successful tours: the Australian Ballet and the Adelaide Australian Dance Theatre.

Seventy-four members of the Ballet plus fifty-one members of the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra left Perth on 24 July for Athens, where their tour opened with four performances for the 1979 Athens Festival. They performed *Spaniards* and *Don Quixote* to standing ovations there and then travelled on to Israel and Turkey. The press called them "the tip of this year's Israeli Festival".

Administration Prior Rahov said in the hour "Our first visit to Greece, Israel and Turkey brought nostalgia to many members of our audiences in these countries. It enabled them to renew associations with Australia, associations made for the greater part during wartime."

The ADT's tour took them to South East Asia, where they went to Jakarta, Singapore, Hong Kong, Penang, Kuala Lumpur and Manila. It has been the job of Monica Vaa for the past eleven years to manage



Members of the Australian Ballet rehearsing at the Herod Atticus Theatre in the base of the Acropolis.

and direct international tours under the Department of Foreign Affairs' Cultural

Relations Programme, and they were in charge of the ADT performed all ten of the

ballets in their repertory, including Jonathan Taylor's *Red Creek* and *Fiddlersgide*.

AUSTRALIAN DRAMA FESTIVAL: I met Susan Vile Tade eleven world premieres, five Youth Australian promotes, institutional drama theatre for young people, cabaret, street theatre, pub-shops, radio plays, a forum on Australian drama put them all together for two weeks in Adelaide and you have the first Australian Drama Festival.

From 22 November, the Festival co-ordinated by Stephen Farrington with assistance from Federal and State Government, hopes to make Adelaide by night filled as a festival of "Australian works" "theatre for the people" and "dramatic literature" is reaching out towards new audiences as well as existing theatre-goers. The idea is the most ambitious coming yet to emerge from the Association of

Communes Theatres, a co-ordinating body established in Adelaide in May 1973.

Early publicity for the Festival stressed the importance of Adelaide as the venue since it is now widely held to be the centre of playwright activity with such names as Elton Allen, Rob George, Ken Ross and Steve J. Spears following in the wake of their Eastern counterparts Herbert Ross, Ronald Williamson and Raye Beckett in many the last years, thus Adelaide is geographically distant from the hub of things. All credit, then, to the organizers who have managed to attract groups from Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne. For all that, it will probably be more of a local festival than the national one is aimed to be. Which is fine. From small beginnings. —



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WHISPERS RUMOURS & FACTS

By Raymond Stanley

Another film on view this time is *Pirth* with watch shooting on F-G Productions' *Melbourne* starring Robert Powell, Cameron Duncanson, Dan O'Hanrahan, Woodruff Crawford and Cam McInerney. As usual was able to pick up some pieces of news. *Paul Powell* has announced he plays Crawford's wife told me who has been reviving her *Joan Allen* stage and next year hopes to tour Australia with *Enigma*, *Enigma*, the first woman play *Margaret Rawlings* has been doing in London.

Also talked with *Brian Lee* out of *Pirth*'s most promising young actors, who made such an impact on the film short *Bark!* *Pirth* will likely be likely to shift to Sydney since Sydney managers please note! *Steen Mays* (from *Melbourne* for a role) will be a serious opportunity for a role in hopes to perform before leaving for London next year. Heard that *Bill Bell* has now settled in Perth.

Workshop being the first major film shot in Perth since *George Williams*, *And of Queens* over six years ago all the local actors from the Playhouse, *Wade* in *The Wall* and *Maria Hall* companies have been coming up for work on parts. When you see the film if you look closely at the symbol-crowned-on-pedestal party scene (and you'll see it in the film) you work that out if you see any signs a few local notables such as *Philly Duggan* and *Leslie Wright*.

Michael J. Gault was on the set from Sydney, specially to look after Hollywood veteran *Woodruff Crawford*. *Michael* apparently, is now completing with me up to his last agency. Was surprised to see on the set concerned *Woodruff Crawford* with his mother, *Helen Woodruff* (member for 10 to the old *Adams-Rogers*, *Two Wives* told me he'd just been playing his old role in *John Fremont* on the London stage.

Quinn obviously we shall be seeing much more of *Daniel Hemmings* in the country. *Bill* and wife *Paul* live Australia and *David* is going to co-produce Australian films along with *Ray Gurnee*. I managed to connect *Robert Powell* he'd agree to do a play in *Adelaide* some time. He finally admitted he'd be interested if the part appeared to him he would select his own director, approve the Australian cast and see if in the country too long.

Willa in Perth took the opportunity of looking up *Stephen Barry* at the Playhouse. It seems some time in the future the National Theatre Company is going to have a brand new building. He will be able to obtain rights to plays for West Australia only and therefore Perth frequently see such attractions, long

before the rest of the country. Australian TV actors appearing on stage there apparently create more interest than say *Melbourne* or *Sydney*, where they're taken for granted. A recent example was *John Woodruff* singing in *The Mary Queen of Scots*.

There were that *John Woodruff* has got his permit to leave British Royal to play the male lead in the English version of *Oliver Twist*. The couple took in there was no one in England as near capable of playing the part. *John* will see he is going to England with mixed feelings. He has mixed feelings about a year's contract with the BBC, something he says he would dearly love to do, also refers to the TV series *King Lear*, *The Bridge* and *Prisoner*. With all the Australian plays that get staged in the country, seems a pity they get such a fair shot in *Adelaide* as well as seen on stage.

Like the wife of *Joe Halsey* says new company *Full House* Spectacular P. L. which is producing *The Glass Menagerie* (other *Scotts* show *Allegiance* *Wheat*) which opened at the West Point Cinema recently named *Glitter Room* at the end of October. The show has been written by *Angus and Peter Rhonda Schepel* with *Roger Woodgrove* as musical director. *Lucas* children's musical written by *Peter Pinner* and *Don Rayne* *Wheat* and *The Glass* gives its first performance at *Monash* Theatre this coming Christmas. It is their seventh musical.

It was *Adelaide*, the new £150-000 musical to open in London next May is already being granted to top *Lucas* in cost, pre-production and early recordings. There has been a search, not TV, to find a beautiful singer-dancer actress to play opposite Australian *Joe Smith*. The star is to be *Willa* and *Willa* is working for a brief. *Helen Gault* *Joanna*, who apparently possesses a two octave range, could appear in a *Regency* musical next year if other commitments permit.

Will the rush of *Joe Smith* play reveals in England spread to Australia? *Gillian Jones* is to play on Broadway in the stage version of the black comedy *Jim Mandy* and *Wendy Tapp* *Frank* is making his Broadway debut in *Neil Simon's* new comedy *Laugh In* to *Pepper*.

By Norman Kevell

Sydney is in danger of losing its longest standing theatre production theatre company, the *Blanc Hall* at *Myriad* Bay. It is on account of the greatly reduced first production, the authorities are demanding. These include two alterations of a few captions and a breakdown scene. An overall expenditure of up to \$150-000 would be involved and that is just in the present existing climate. Discussions were continuing at last week with little sign of the authorities relaxing, even though the building appeared in a general fire disaster between *George* and *Berna Hill* brought it to its present situation.

There has been some talk also of this other popular and popular theatre restaurant, the *Ball*'s back having problems. Something to do with a tax matter. I believe, but *Frank Simon* agrees that it's all business as usual in his own long-term business and that he's growing up for the company Christmas party now.

Have you noticed that the name of that shadowed of choruses, *Ken Bradshaw* who

lives big mistake, is moving from the formidable company that he up for *Joan* with much? presented in Australia by *Robert Segued* in association with *David Lind*, *Great Harbour Organisations*, *Adelaide Festival Centre Trust* and *Michael Eighty* *International* *City Ltd*. And some?

King Liverpool's new *Off* presently the last? *Canadian* show *See Off* there is again being produced by *Erik Durr*. It opens in *Melbourne* in February and comes into *Perth* *May*'s last new show. The *Exhibition* Theatre Trust will tour the *Melbourne Theatre Company* production of *Alan Bush* *Lines*, *My River*. It will be at the Theatre Royal from June 3 to 10 next.

Christopher Johnny Lockwood back from another European holiday tour tells of staying at *Danny La Rue's* castle-on-hill (it is a conversion of that to place a hotel on another hill) in a room at *La Rue* visiting *Ray Davies* at his 500-year old manor house at *Sturminster-on-Seas*. *Ray* was playing *Johnny's* old role of *Fagin* in the London revival of *Oliver!* but was soon to depart for America with a new company show about *Abraham Lincoln* which he plans to bring to *Adelaide* about next March.

Johnny also saw *Charles* (*Man Of La Mancha*) *Wendy* in *Daddy Warbucks* in *Adelaide* (I liked him better than *Stratford Jones*, whom I saw on my previous tour) and also saw *Wendy Rhonda* doing a long job in *The Angel* *Off* *revel*. *Wendy* was then under the stress of having his two children with her, but was hopeful she could be strengthened now.

Johnny (I now hope preparing to turn one of his recent concerns, the *Wendy* *Ballroom*, in *Magazine* *Secret* *Adelaide*, was a short restaurant on November 3. A major programme *Shakespeare* 70 with *Lockwood*, *Daniel Wills*, *Bill Whitfield*, *Mary Schuster* and *Lex Van Der Burgh* with *Don George* and *Wendy Hill* will play *Wednesdays*, *Thursdays* and *Fridays*.

I believe there is nothing political about *Michael Eglar's* changing of the title of the long-promised *Red Army* *Chorus* to the Russian Army *Songbook* *Dance* Co. It just shows there are other ways and other concerns than there are other ways.

It is back review section will no doubt be commenting on the *1978* *Performance* *Art* *Book* of *Adelaide*. It is a national undertaking that depends greatly on the goodwill of the producers to supply the material so that the completeness of some extent, it is really for profit as in the many kinds. I think it is a pity however that with a major production like *4 Chorus* *Line* only, the *Melbourne* cast is included so that a fine performer like *Fannie Glavin*, who all but stole the *Adelaide* season, does not get a mention. Nevertheless, it is an invaluable record.

For the incomplete *Glavin* *Field*, *By* *show* we saw her here under her name *Michael Puckman* just a few days before she died. Among my own memories of her was an occasion when she gave in the *Shakespeare* some years ago. It was being filmed for overseas promotion and before a large an official audience the audience to applaud as usually at present after each number. *Indignant* was *Glavin* pushed back hard but firmly said saying, "That isn't necessary. I can get all the applause I need." And she did fight them and throughout her performance.

LETTERS

WRITER'S RIGHTS

Dear Sir:

My thanks are due to both Norma Miller and Ted for airing my grievance about relations conduct on the part of certain theatre companies who have failed to acknowledge letters, return scripts and pay, certainly. It is to be hoped that they have not belied themselves into a state of little sincerity as I can assure them that they have not by any means heard the last of the affair.

As the risk of securing petty minded may, I point out that the title of my play is, *The Beach Of Ash* and not *A Beach Of Ash*. This is a mistake made by many people and I often wonder how it comes about.

Yours sincerely...

Reis Roland
Fitzroy, Vic.

SHORT BRECHT

Dear Sir:

Some more additions to your previous list of productions of Brecht plays in South Australia, as published in the June issue 1974: 4 *Man A Day* Translated by University of Adelaide German Department Director Charles Feldman for L.A. Theatre Guild.

1975: *Mother Courage* Director: David Allen for La Mama Theatre.
1976: *Brecht on Brecht* Director: Warwick Cooper for Manna Park CAFE.
1976: *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* Director: Jon Vile for L.A. Theatre Guild (Adelaide Festival Production).
Yours sincerely,

Susan Vile
Adelaide, S.A.

TRENDY REVIEWING?

Dear Sir:

May I comment on Garrie Hutchinson's interview in *The Golden Years Of Gough*?

I don't much care whether or not Mr Hutchinson thinks the show didn't represent much progress in its ideas, the show wasn't made for critics to play "trendy's progress".

But his comment that the politics are lost in the style is puzzling. The show was written at a Trade Union and ALP audience.

Melbourne Trades Hall brought the house out night the Victorian ALP bought it another (on both occasions, curiously the entire audience stayed to supper, and over the burgers the talk

certainly wasn't about style. It was about the fact that the show had made politically committed and knowledgeable people look at events they were familiar with in a fresh and surprised way (which, of course, is what the style was intended to do).

Garrie Hutchinson's dismissal of the political rightness contrasts strongly with Jim Cairns' remark that the show should be made compulsory viewing for Cairns (See *Jim Cairns, an Australian Spectator*, Ash).

But then, I suppose a trendy drama critic has a lot less to learn about politics than a former Deputy Prime Minister.

Yours sincerely,
Allen Hunt,
Melbourne, Vic.

RUSSEY BIGLES

Dear Sir:

There are several errors in John Easkin's article on *Russey Bigles* as quoted in your September 1979 issue.

I feel that this should be corrected for record purposes. After its opening in 1948 it was revived in 1949 (twice) and 1951. The final and last production prior to the present one was in 1964 not 1962.

I co-wrote, with William Horn as I was a member of the original 1948 cast and the only member of that cast to appear in 1964.

Yours sincerely,
Frank Carter,
Glebe Point, NSW.

STATE COMPANY FOR NT

Dear Sir:

Regarding a proposal for a State Company of the NT, negotiators have taken place with the Theatre Board through Michael Fitzgerald and Brian Swaine, both of whom visited recently and with the local Minister of Community Development (Nek Duguid) and his administration when the Darwin Theatre Group Committee have met with on two occasions.

The Theatre Board have offered strong support for the idea and assured us of backing provided that the NT Government and local resources are prepared to come to the party. We have planned a "staged" growth for the scheme to cover several years for development, a copy of which is enclosed. A RANE claim at \$20,000 is hoped for in the coming year. The "Board" staging was suggested by Michael Fitzgerald. It that can be made to work in terms of the resource aims of the subscribers, then Base 2 or Base 1 funding

can be anticipated in 1981-82, presumably.

The NT Government are much less enthusiastic than the "Theatre Board". The Minister naturally liked that the DTG are well-situated to the disadvantage of taking away funds from the other groups in the NT. He claims that money granted by him to fund a completely new venture, so stealing from Peter to pay Paul is the only prospect before him. We get \$5,000 at present from the NT Government. This money goes towards a part-time business manager. This year (1979) has been the first year in which the NT Government has made any contribution to the DTG. I don't know, but I suspect groups in Gove, Groote, Katherine, Tennant Creek and Alice Springs get a lot less than our \$5,000 - so the theatre boards from this Government is anything but auspicious by any level of comparison. That it could even match the minimum needs of our theatre resource programme is highly unlikely.

Our main pre-occupation at present is to win over support from the other NT groups, especially Alice Springs. Those groups have to be shown how a State Theatre Resource can help their own community theatre, especially through the more regular provision of skilled personnel and technical advice and assistance. There are a lot of references from the original subscribers warning the "resource aims". I don't mind come back to those aims constantly if the resource is to be based on their more practical view of "commitment", "class" and "putting on a play". That is turned in their prejudices from seeing the "full indulgence of the few" to the "communal sharing of as many people as possible".

Funding inquiries from the NT Government have not been relevant so I can add nothing more positive to our position at present. Meanwhile we press on.

Here's a couple of Brecht productions which you might care to add to the Australian list of your note before last.

The Good Woman Of Seneca
directed by Robert Kember
White Park Theatres, College Drama Society, December 1979, South Australia.
The Caucasian Chalk Circle

directed by Rick Bingham
Darwin Theatre Group, Northern Territory June 1971.

Yours sincerely,
Robert Kember
Arnhem Director
Darwin Theatre Group, NT.

SPOTLIGHT

Playing Twins

Lucy Wagner talks to The Venetian Twins himself, his director and musical director.

Belletic is a word that keeps coming up in relation to the Nimrod Sydney Theatre Company production of *The Venetian Twins*. Drew Forsyth, John Bell and Terry Clarke all use it to describe the play itself, and their various contributions to it — acting, dancing and music.

The production started life as a straight translation, with Australian colloquialisms, of Goldoni's play, by Nick Enright. A little later it seemed to show more potential as a musical, so the dialogue was cut down and songs added, as this version then turned out to be too long more dialogue was cut with the result that now more than 50% of the play is taken up by the musical numbers.

"It's probably closer to commedia dell'arte than Goldoni would have approved of" says Bell, but Terry Clarke, composer and musical director, feels they're sticking to the spirit of commedia in "taking everything we think will make people laugh, and using it."

The selection goes on apace. John Bell explains that they've taken commedia types, but made them much more recognisable to Australian audiences. They almost make up a potted history of musical comedy, with Barry Lount drawing on his music hall experience, Jon Enright's character coming from Victorian melodrama and Jennifer McInerog playing a 50's Hollywood musical heroine. The only character that is actually Australian is the dumb twin, Zaneeta, who takes his style from Australian vaudeville and variety, the rustic character of an older generation perhaps of George Wallace's era.

Drew Forsyth is no novice at making people laugh, and it is for his

and never straight away as the other."

Although the company is taking from wherever and whatever they find appropriate, they feel that the influence of commedia has come down to us primarily through the vaudeville tradition. It seems a pity now that the play has been advertised as "Goldoni's *Venetian Twins*" — an unstable title they all feel — and in the programme it will read "a musical by Nick Enright and Terry Clarke from a play by Goldoni".

Forsyth, Bell and Clarke have worked together previously on *How Could You Believe Me When I Said I'd Be Your Paler When You Know I've*

Been A Lar Aii Mi Life!, the adaptation of Goldoni's *Servant of Two Masters* — a production similar in style but that had much less music incorporated. Drew tells of how they tried then to get some vaudeville tuition from Johnny Lockwood and Gloria Dawn, "Johnny Lockwood told us his life story and Gloria listened and said 'That's right Johnny'. We didn't really learn anything, but they were very entertaining. The reason those sort of performers work up are to suit their own personalities and you can't transfer them. We have to do the same, which means five weeks rehearsal is really cutting it fine."



Terry Clarke, John Bell and Drew Forsyth in *The Venetian Twins*

comic talent and versatility that he is cast as both the spongy twin. Playing two characters in one play involves literally twice as much work for him, though, in a production that in any case involves singing, dancing and sword fighting. By the second half of the play, the plot has speeded up to an incredible pace with the appearances of the different twins coming hard on each other's heels. "I started off trying to make quite subtle differences between the two characters," he says, "but that's gone out the window and they're now quite outrageous. At one point I have to do a big musical number as one twin, exit

There was a great deal of tumbling and acrobatic movement in *How Could You Believe Me?* which they thought could be made use of again, but the different staging has knocked the idea on the head. In an effort to tighten the actor audience relationship in the dangerous Drama Theatre, John Bell is not using the conventional stage at all, but putting a twelve foot wide rake from the edge of it, over where the first four rows of seats are now, to the foot of the new first row of audience. Nimrod-type bench seats will surround the other two sides. This has caused some

(Continued page 15)

An Affair With Alice

By RON RODGERS

The local residents of Alice Springs boast of a population that is closer to 17 000 than the official statistical records which are more conservative by at least a couple of thousand. With a history of tourism going back almost a century, the indigenous population may have its numbers swelled by close on a quarter million in a good season.

It is not therefore surprising, to learn that The Alice Springs Theatre Group has been in existence for some thirty-three years and over that period, its selection of adventurous, quality plays for presentation to a demanding and tenacious Territory audience would shame many major theatre establishments. Some examples which come to mind are *The Brewster Boy*, *King O'Malley*, *A Touch of Silk*, *Firehouse*, *Down Port* and *Harold Sade* to name but a few.

Around mid-September last year, while directing *The Brewster Boy* Of Arnon Dv with the Alice Springs Theatre Group, Brian Debraum laid the ground-work for his scheme to locate himself and three professional actors in Alice to work on a three month low profile-high involvement Community Arts project. The plan was to bring actors with specific teaching skills to act as professional advisers, teachers and performers in a residential environment that, until the Q Theatre's last-blaze efforts in Perth in 1977, was relatively new to the country.

High ongoing work-loads for the four professionals has been the consequence of organising the project, dovetailing one activity into another so that the Alice Springs community, schools and theatre group members achieve maximum mileage from the project. Members of the local group worked on submissions to The Northern Territory Arts Council, N.T. Government and Australia Council whilst digging deep into their own coffers, providing funds for production budgets and four modest salaries (only the hardy need apply's



Brian Debraum in acting class with the Alice Springs Theatre Group



Alice Springs Theatre Group's 'A Touch of Silk' (1978) directed by Brian Debraum

Four major productions including Friedrich Schiller's *Platz Singsberg*, Neil Simon's *The Good Doctor*, a pub-show as he written on the basis of Alice Springs *A Touch of Silk* and an East End version of John Gay's *The Beggar's Opera*, are the basis of the 'lost front' activity. In the wings are Deborah Little, pro-actors, handling classes in movement. David Huethouse, pro actor, handling technical theatre and stage-management and myself, covering voice and speech development. Brian Debraum conducting classes in acting and directing all major works. The project has increased the participating theatre group numbers close on to 60 enthusiastic residents of Alice, providing side compensation to the football training activity on the oval

right next door to the Tatern Theatre.

After just five weeks of the project the first professional production of *Platz Singsberg* in Australia has played to capacity houses in Alice Springs. The evening and week-end workshops are continuing with that vital sense of group-cohesion, hard work and enjoyment which is rarely marred by apologies for lateness.

The local schools will see us for many hours over the next five and a half weeks, signing their English and History classes through drama experience of rich local historical events. Next week we commence work in the High Schools, working Hecker

and Shakespeare texts with the students many of whom have already sat-in on *Platz Singsberg* rehearsals. Unstructured events such as poetry recital and song at the Folk Club, workshops in drama with handicapped children and adults are our mounting strengths as more members of the community become aware of our collective skills and assets.

At the completion of the Alice Project, Stage Company will have toured *Platz Singsberg* to major centres in the Northern Territory for two weeks before flying home to Darwin 'Home' for the Stage Company is the Malsary Theatre in Adelaide where we will have presented a further season of *Platz Singsberg* in early October.

The Golden Years Of Gough

By JIM CAIRNS

The Golden Years of Gough was devised and produced by the Victorian College of the Arts and Albert Hunt. It played in August at the Grant Street Theatre, Melbourne to packed houses, and will probably have a national tour in 1988.

The most important task in the world today is to explain the irrational in politics and social life and from that, work out ways of reducing and eliminating it.

The irrational cannot be reduced or eliminated from politics and social life by economists - by economic growth, affluence or rising standards of living. As they have all increased, the irrational has got worse.

To begin to understand the irrational, we need to recognise the reasons people believe they have for their actions are often not the causes of their actions.

The Golden Years of Gough written and produced by the Victorian College of the Arts, is a superb example of exposure of the irrational in politics and of the fact that the reasons people do have for their actions are often not the causes of them.

Some will be angry about *The Golden Years of Gough*. They will say it is unfair to the Labor Party and to Gough Whitlam and others. It is not. And the validity of what the play does, has strength because it is not "professional" - that is to say, choosing to be based on or to avoid bias. It is rational. It is as the writers, producers, and actors felt. This is rare on the stage, on paper or anywhere else.

It should be compulsory viewing for every Labor Member of Parliament now and in the future.

It shows them how to laugh at themselves, without having to repress and distort the experience. Pretensions, naive bitterness and desire to expose, exhibited by any person can be funny. When exposed in this way, it often becomes easier to learn from and hurt less.

The play concentrates upon the main characters. Perhaps time made this unavoidable, but the full story requires the inclusion of others and additional facts. I do not know whether all the facts are accurate, but most of those I know about are.

The substance of the play is a Labor Party under siege - what happened in 1917, 1931, 1947-49 and in 1975 - in a



always happen whenever a government - and it can only be a Labor Government - threatens some significant interest of those who control the means of production.

In 1917 it was opposing conscription, in 1931 it was urging the banks to get money to provide employment, in 1947-49 it was to nationalise the banks, in 1974-75 it was to permit a rise in money wages greater than acceptable to the controllers of the economy, to use the banks to get more money for the Budget than they would provide, and to borrow from sources other than the banks - from Arab countries - to build or buy industries which would compete with the controllers of the economy.

When a Labor Government threatens them - and some Labor Governments mostly in the States, can work out ways not to threaten them - then media pressure is turned on. The Labor Government then becomes a

"spot-it enclave" and it is forced away from the issues which threaten the controllers of the economy, and the enclave becomes filled with trivia. Trivia like the Rheinland and Moron affairs; trivia like the letters I gave to Harris. And so the whole parliamentary party shifts from substantial issues to trivial issues - it accepts the issues that are chosen for it by the media and takes the side on those issues which the media dictates. Hence, those who are wrong on those issues have to be discarded. And so the government disintegrates.

As far as public opinion polls showed, the public approved of my returning June Moron, it approved of Corbett's financing of his national industries, of the expenditure we were making and of the provision of money through the Budget to meet it, and provision even of wage increases. But as 1975 went on, the parliamentary party turned more and more against them. And so we moved from substantial issues to trivial issues and took the side the media set out to make us take.

The Golden Years of Gough could have brought all this out more readily, but it does so clearly for all those who are not blinkered by media propaganda, or for those who do see that the reasons they call loyalty to the Labor Party may not be the cause of their actions.

The year 1975 made vivid for me Arthur Bevan's remark in 1959 "The burdens of public life are too heavy to carry for trivial ends." What the Labor Party could do late in 1975 was much limited to trivial ends. It need not happen. If it is to be avoided, much more has to be learned about the irrational in politics.

In the millions of words written about 1975 in papers and books by professionals, most of them have not done nearly so much to provide an opportunity for us to learn about the irrational in politics and perhaps, as a result, to strengthen the Labor Party, as does *The Golden Years of Gough*.

I congratulate those who took part in it for their skill and integrity.

Rick Billinghamurst and La Boite

By DON BATCHELOR

You don't meet Rick Billinghamurst, you are confronted by him unannounced by him some people would say. The aggressive public face of the man transferred to La Boite Theatre in the two and a half years he was Artistic Director, and received an admirable amateur enterprise from the possible presumption its name implies.

It is true that before Billinghamurst's time the play policy was adventurous enough, and there were things like the Early Childhood Drama Project (a team of full-time teacher actors working with pre-school and primary kids) and personal development classes for housewives, which showed a clear commitment to serving the community in a more than "theatrical" sense. Here was something other than theatre for theatre's sake, or theatre for self-expression which is an even worse amateur manifestation. What Billinghamurst did was to give edge to the policy, shape and balance to the programme, and first-rate presentation to the package.

In addition, his aggressive questioning style, confrontant and wild though it was, prevented the formation of a cocoon. Constant internal criticism never allowed people to settle into comfortable roles. The whole time Billinghamurst was there, the place was always simmering and much of the heat generated was between artistic director and board over such things as style and image, the personnel used in production, the programme and consequent limitations on audience, the wood question of professionalism in a situation where only a few people are paid, and the inconstant problem of how to balance the attractions of a subsidy against the loss of independence it represents.

Since Billinghamurst is no diplomat, an explosion in this area was avoided largely by the skill and generous vision



of Jennifer Blockidge who played a key bridging role inside and outside the theatre, allowing his values to flourish.

Chief of these was the belief that theatre should address small to social, moral, political and theatrical issues which challenge the local community—or should do anyway. The audience for this is a big, provincial town like Brisbane is inevitably minimal, but there was sufficient popular heaven like *Shakespeare's Christmas* or *Grease* to save the box office. Even here the appeal was geared towards the under-thirties who tend to supply the core of supporters, though a recent Noel Coward seemed somewhat abhorrent. The death of university theatre in recent years allowed La Boite to capture a following from the western suburbs set and not a few of its performers came from the campus.

Perhaps the most interesting example of Billinghamurst's socio-political fancy was a show called *Rapin' Bushes: East Timor* devoted to collaboration with Richard Batheringham and John O'Toole. An ambitious dramatic exploration of the cluster of issues surrounding Indonesia's invasion into East Timor and including such material as the final film shot by Australian

journalists killed in the conflict, it was hardly theatre of entertainment. Nor did Brisbane flock to see it. In part this was because neither the creative team nor the theatrical elements quite gelled, but it was a tribute to Billinghamurst's social conscience, courage and cool-headedness that the attempt was so significantly made.

It was on occasions like this that Billinghamurst's major talent came to the fore—than is his highly developed stage instinct. There are numerous stories of how he helped a floundering actor or a stalled director to make and adjustment which released a log jam just before opening night. These stories are matched by an equal number which record his brashness at such times.

The same reputation for brashness extended to his public utterances to the media or at meetings. The ploy was that much of his outspoken criticism of other companies, of *Theatre Australia* or local critics, of funding bodies and of personalities, got brushed aside as mere mischief or provocation. The result was that he was less liked and less appreciated than his undoubted energy, care and commitment deserved. A lot of what he said was less than rational, but it demanded

ROCK & THEATRE

By Suellen O'Grady

Theatre in rock, or rock in theatre is becoming a fashionable concept to discuss these days. Protagonists from both stages generally argue with great enthusiasm but little real knowledge as to where the cross-fertilisation between the two arts begins and ends.

After all, some say, rock and theatre are in the same league. Both seek to entertain and stimulate in some fashion or another. No, no, snail others. Rock and theatre are light years apart. Sophisticated theatre audiences could never stand the rowdy noise and discomfort of a rock concert, the very mention of which denotes sweaty and unimpeachable adolescent behaviour.

The actual similarities and differences between rock and theatre are more subtle than some stage producers would have us believe. It could be argued plausibly that opera and rock, both being musical forms, have more in common with each other than rock and theatre.

But to be precise to the point of pedantry, rock has more in common with theatre, (defined by the Chambers dictionary as "relating or suitable to, or occurring on the stage, stagg, histrionic, aiming at producing a dramatic effect") than with the theatre per se. Similarly, drama is more likely to use rock music as a theatre device rather than as an

integral factor in production. Sam Shepard did this effectively with *Tooth of Crime*. Locally Tim Gooding tried but failed in his play *Rock!ble* which lost itself somewhere between rock and theatre and never found its way out. Even theatre messiahs like *War* and *Jesus Christ Superstar* use rock music in a traditional dramatic form rather than attempt to stage a pure rock concert.

Film has succeeded better in transmuting rock into powerful cinema without losing its urgency and vitality. *The Bad News Jungle*, with Bill Hally and the Cornets, and *Expresso Songs* with the late Laurence Harvey, used the dynamics of rock more effectively than the theatre has ever done.

Theatre, (putting aside its use of rock music as a theatre effect) generally is concerned with conveying attitudes and values, imposing mood by inflection, tone and expression. Rock could be described as a more primitive art, concerned with spectacular and wild effect.

Perhaps because of its concerns and its traditional opposition to what is widely considered as a wildly popular and therefore fairly non-intellectual form of expression. Playwrights and producers have not appeared too eager to study then transform into theatre the dynamics and effects of a rock

concert. So theatre producers have been less successful in employing rock in drama than rock musicians have been in employing theatrics in their concerts.

Not rock musicians are not as purist in their approach. David Bowie, a young Englishman, studied music under Lindsay Kemp for many years to achieve amazing theatrics on stage. Bowie is one performer who has never been adverse to changing his stage persona. His last Australian tour saw him standing still as a statue and commanding much more attention because of his immobility. Kemp had taught him the theatrical value of immobility and he uses it with devastating effect. Bowie also knows the theatrics of lighting to create mood and tension. Luckily, he has been fond of black and white light to create a frightening, menacing effect, further illustrating the meaning of his songs.

Kate Bush is another English singer who studied with Kemp to create beautifully erotic stage movements to emphasise her music. In her hit song, "Withering Heights" she mimed poor Cathy clawing wildly at the window to reach Heathcliff in a visually stunning performance which no doubt made thousands rush down to their record store and buy her album.

The group Yes, with their beautiful lyrical harmonies had already gone

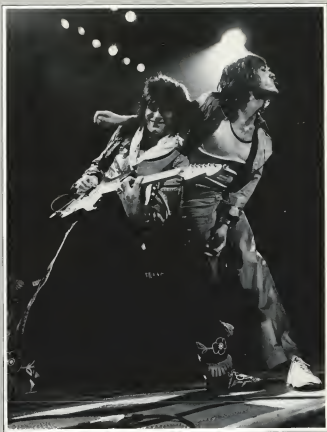



Photo: Mike Pugh



one further with their rock-theatrical production of *Journey To The Centre Of The Earth*. They employed a narrator, a symphony orchestra and a whole cast to tell their musical story. The Who, with their rock opera *Tommy* did much the same thing.

And of course, there is the legendary Mick Jagger, who times the pace of his dramatic concerts with as much care and attention as the most skillful playwright. Jagger used to come on stage wearing a dirty old raincoat, belting his songs out to an order meticulously designed to whip his audience to their usual frenzy. When they reached that state, he would whip off the coat to reveal a glittering spectacular costume.

Lastly, the Angels are the one group to use the theories of lighting and movement for optimal effect. All but the lead singer, Don Nesson, stand motionless throughout the entire concert, forcing the audience's attention to focus on his spastic dancing. Green spotlights used fixed on the other members, but wave and dance around Nesson.

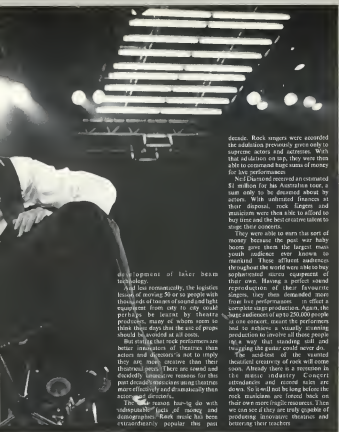
In the second half of the decade, popular Australian rock groups like Skyhooks and Captain Matchbox used to perform in alternative Melbourne theatre workshops which combined music and theatre before they opted to concentrate on music, using the tricks taught them by their theatre experience.

It is perhaps ironic that rock groups have learned their tricks of lighting and movement from theatre, but tend to use them with far greater impact. I can think of only a few plays (most

notably *Equus*) where lighting or any form of technological effect has contributed significantly to the tensions and dynamics of the production.

In rock, such considerations are stuck in trade. The continual search for the dramatic and the theatre by musicians and promoters urged them on to explore the modern technology of lighting and stage machinery.

It is unlikely we would ever have seen the Rolling Stones emerge from the giant mechanical flower, as they did on their tour before last, or the remarkable laser lighting effects used by so many rock groups. If Mick Jagger and his peers were not continuously looking for new and visually stunning effects with which to stun their audience. Demands by rock musicians actually affected the de-



development of laser beam technology.

And less romantically, the logistic issue of moving 50 or so people with thousands of tonnes of sound and light equipment from city to city could perhaps be eased by theatre producers, many of whom seem to think these days that the use of props should be avoided at all costs.

But stating that rock performers are better imitators of theatres than actors and directors is not to imply they are more creative than their theatrical peers. There are sound and decidedly legitimate reasons for this post decade's mania for using theatres more effectively and dramatically than actors and directors.

The sole reason for this is the indisputable fact of money and demographics. Rock music has been extraordinarily popular this past

decade. Rock singers were accorded the adulation previously given only to supreme actors and actresses. With that adulation on top, they were then able to command huge sums of money for live performances.

Ned Diamond received an estimated \$1 million for his Australian tour, a sum only to be dreamed about by actors. With unlimited finances at their disposal, rock singers and musicians were then able to afford to buy time and the best creative talent to stage their concerts.

They were able to earn this sort of money because the post war baby boom gave them the largest mass youth audience ever known to mankind. These affluent audiences, throughout the world were able to buy sophisticated stereo equipment of their own. Having a perfect sound reproduction of their favourite singers, they then demanded more from live performances. In effect a complete stage production. Again, the huge audiences of up to 250,000 people at one concert, meant the performers had to achieve a visually stunning production to involve all those people in a way that standing still and twanging the guitar could never do.

The acid-test of the vaunted theatrical creativity of rock will come soon. Already there is a recession in the music industry. Concert attendances and record sales are down. So it will not be long before the rock musicians are forced back on their own more humble resources. Then we can see if they are truly capable of producing innovative theatres and bettering their teachers.

JOHN SUMNER



John Sumner, Artistic Director of the Melbourne Theatre Company, is Australia's longest standing artistic director and head of its largest and oldest subsidised theatre company - the Union Theatre Repertory Company, later the MTC, started in 1953.

To have held a theatre company together for such a time Sumner is necessarily a man with strong views and about whom others feel strongly. What is his response to not infrequent accusations of autocracy and empire building?

I hope to get together the best group of people to do theatre, if people think I have other motives I couldn't care.

If you want a company adept at working in the best way you have to work in a number of spaces. Without new Athenaeum 2 studio space the actors are now working with a completely different audience relationship to anything our presentism theatres can give - and they'll need this sort of experience for when we move into the Arts Centre.

A company dealing with the classics can become hothoused by them, we must be able to tackle contemporary works or we will atrophy, so where do we do them? We couldn't put a Pinter like *Benjamin* in to the Athenaeum so we need a smaller space like Russell Street, our main venue because of its size for a lot of contemporary writing which may not have a huge following and because of the style needs an intimate space. You need a rounded repertoire to develop a company and so you need all three spaces.

I'm not concerned about these sorts of accusations because I know, why we're doing things.

The MTC's move to the Melbourne Arts Centre now 'in construction, is projected to be in 1983; it will do little to allay their expansionist image, but Sumner does not intend to give up the company's other theatres when that happens.

We will keep all the theatres going. We're only going into the Arts Centre for a limited time each year so we're hardly going to stop operations for that...and they're not giving us the Arts Centre as our own theatre. In the south,

stages it seemed different, the excavation was going to be much deeper and it was going to take in all the workshops, rehearsal spaces and storage areas. Now all these facilities are outside and we will only be performing in there for about forty weeks of the year. We will have the opportunity to turn the Athenaeum into a house where good prestigious revivals can be done, so we can be sure of an audience and it will help to subsidise our operation.

Because of the development of our audience, which is now the largest for drama in the country, the Arts Centre wouldn't be big enough for us, it was lower than the Athenaeum which plays to pretty high percentage houses. Can we double our audience? Yes, I think we can, especially to begin with when there will be enormous curiosity about the building, but it's up to the State Government to come up with the funds. Unless they do that we could fail; it's a vast move and has needed a number of companies, here and overseas. But there's no point in going in in an insubstantial way - you just get mediocrity.

Although the MTC is by a long way the biggest theatre company, its relationships with other Melbourne companies are notoriously cool. What does Sumner think of the groups he has been known to call 'rivals'?

La Mama is probably the most important of the alternative companies, it's been a constant backbone, doing things that no one else can. Its work should be more known - I suppose that means they should have more money.

I respect the APC. They've had tough times and are now trying to reorganise themselves. I am a great believer in trying to look into the soul of a company every year, we try to redraw the management chart, reassess artistic objectives - I only wish to hell that we could make more dramatic changes, but sometimes one comes to the conclusion you are doing a lot you can in the right way. It sounds wrong, but there are only a certain number of alternatives. No, I think the APC have created some very interesting things.

Hoopla! I don't feel it's a very distinctive alternative to anything. They do the odd American small-scale

musical, but I don't know how necessary that is. I suppose it's always good to have competition, but they're doing it mainly with the same people. I don't know if it's the same audience, but it's the same actors, same designers and largely the same plays, and it would be better if they had something individual to do. The same public money is being spent to do the same work, why?

Proliferation of activity then, does not necessarily encourage quality and Sumner does not even budge its wider range of theatres.

Look at comparable cities in the English speaking world, and you find fewer companies than you have in Sydney, the number's closer to what we have in Melbourne. If you have a reasonably tight theatre community the thinner you spread it the weaker it gets. Talking in general, fewer companies mean better quality. The population comparison is with towns like Birmingham, Liverpool, Leeds and they generally have just one company.

Australia is not a cultural centre, but if you do want to attract tourists the way is to have one spanking good company - like Stratford on Avon. Any of the state companies could do given the money. South Australia is the best off, they have the best conditions to be the top national company, and the biggest grant, but it depends entirely on the leadership.

Talking to John Sumner money comes up as a major factor in every subject touched upon.

The money situation worries me very much, it's very difficult to get your head above water. The war was won by having a good person in the field and a good person administering, but it's very difficult to do both - and money is essential to the whole thing.

We really need a large company of actors, which we don't have. We're forced into giving actors large roles in a series of plays because it's much cheaper to keep actors working day and night, day and night, but it's not good. You don't get the best from them. We have forty or fifty actors engaged at the moment, which is rare,

because we're working on five productions presently - three in Melbourne, one in Sydney and one in rehearsal. It's not a permanent company and I wish it were.

We need a very strong training programme, but if they're workingday and night who wants to talk about training? We're working on a Shakespeare in a three-sided auditorium at the moment which is a new experience, but we'd be much better equipped if we were able to have the vocal, movement and leading training we need, a gymnasium and a pool.

I'd like to widen the artistic component, to have designers engaged on a continuing contract to do four or five designs a year, so they could also be part of the artistic stimulation as well as directors. We are taking new people on next year, assistant directors - God knows where the money's coming from - but it is the only way for young people to learn, to be actively attached to a company.

We must keep saying "How can we earn enough money?" The only answer is we have to put a bigger burden on everybody.

The work burden and the lack of funds runs through from John Sumner's view of his own company into his thoughts about the whole of Australian theatre.

The situation is to an extent one of forced growth in which, if we are not careful, support will be withdrawn. The UK is going through this with the new government, cuts and VAT, and I find that disgusting. The only way of coping with that is to ask for more of everyone but that is a short term and short-sighted solution. You can do great things with enthusiasm: yes, we set up the company and did two-weekly rep and I did fifteen plays in thirty weeks and everybody said we're marvellous. But at the end of it we were all fit for hospital: you can't do that.

The chances are that the growth that could have produced companies of national and even international consequence won't eventuate because of lack of funds. We have to face that we are a country of very small population and therefore have very few actors, designers, directors, for the

amount that is being done. There are some highly talented people and I guess the subsidising programme has been socialist, but when the money starts to get tight as it is beginning to do, then some very things are going to happen. It may be that the big companies will go altogether but it would be a pity from the point of view of standards and good work that can be done.

It's not easy to do good work on a continuing basis. It's easy to do good work that is a flash in the pan but there's a vast difference between that and a well-organised, well-run, subsidised company.

Although the smooth organisation of the Melbourne Company is indisputable, it has been attacked for certain aspects of its artistic work. One is its lack of innovation, an accusation by Artistic Director refuted.

The MTC's work is as broad as any. For instance we now have our own studio space: we did the first Vietnam play and I don't know why more people haven't taken up plays like *Anders*. *Macbeth* this year was the most innovative Shakespeare we've ever done - it was slaughtered by the critics, but did fantastic business. We do a lot of them and it's often successful, so people think if it's successful it must be traditional. And of course we've done a huge number of Australian plays.

But the company is said to impose an English rep style on its work, antipathetic to the development of an indigenous style.

We don't consciously try to change people's vocal sounds. The classes are written in English and in a way that if you can't get a tongue in the right place at the right time you can't say the words. Obviously you can't do an Australian play in an English accent, all I ask is that the text is read intelligently. Shakespeare requires cadence and intonation demanded by the text, it is a process of speech that comes out of thought related complexity to the words. Failing imitations the Australian propensity for accentuating the adjective rather

than the noun, are not because they have nothing to do with the text. You look separately at each play: it is an artistic standard that crosses all barriers of nationality. Certainly you can be gimmicky, but you have to pick your plays.

And picking actors? I here seem to be constant rumours that certain actors are never used by the Melbourne Theatre Company for reasons of personal prejudice. But Sumner replies that...

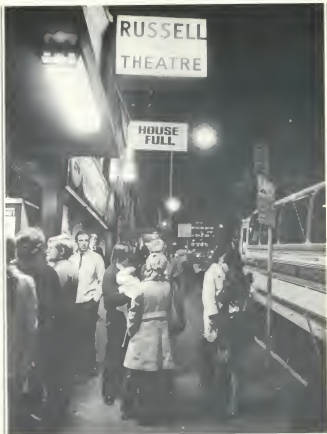
Where there are parts that suit any actor will be cast. There are no grudges.

And for the future. There has been mention of Sumner's retirement in the Melbourne papers, one suggesting that he wanted to retire when the company had moved into the Arts Centre. He is indefinite on the subject.

Obviously I'm not going to be there forever, and I hope to be able to pull away before I am too decrepit. But I don't want to think any further ahead than the Arts Centre at the moment. It is a problem which has set us back several years: discussions were first started in 1980 and our occupancy should have been in 74-5. That has stunted our growth: we marked time in a tiny theatre. Perhaps we should have been more vigorous in building our own theatre. When we went into St Martins Theatre we were attacked for being expansionist, but we were again only trying to prepare ourselves for the Arts Centre.

But is there a possible successor being trained?

Oh, there's always someone to step into the leadership. As long as the company structure is strong and the board knows the aims of the company, it will be OK. If I dropped dead tomorrow I don't think the company would stop functioning. They would be unprepared, but last year I went away for ten months and the company didn't fall to pieces. I have very good heads of department who look after the running of the company. I'm sure at times people wonder what I do



WRITERS' VIEW

BARRY OAKLEY

Barry Oakley is a novelist, short story writer and reviewer as well as one of Australia's most notable playwrights. His plays include *Redflower* and *The Feet of Daniel Alasado*. *The Ship's Whistle* was performed at the Pram Factory last year, and this month the Melbourne Theatre Company are producing his most recent play, *Mardiapolis*.

Everything seems to happen to me relatively late: puberty, marriage, my first novel not published till I was 36, my first play performed (in La Marna, Carlton) at 37. Being ten (and looking fifteen) years older than what used to be called the new wave of Australian dramatists has only one advantage I can think of: it gives me a longer perspective across theatrical modes and fashions, and makes one wary of pronouncements about the coming and going of styles. (Realism is dead. Artaud is alive and well and living in North Fitzroy... this is not the way Brecht should be done.)

Let me therefore settle into a rocking chair, tap the pipe and recall antediluvian times. My theatre memories extend to the nineteen forties, when as schoolboys, we enjoyed on the classroom platform such English One-Act perennials as *The Ole In The Road* and *The Out-Side* (name "laugh all draughts be

had, warm or cold").

Occasionally we were allowed out of our prisons for some culture. I remember seeing *Hamlet* at the Players and Playgoers, a tiny theatre in a Little Collins Street basement. It was run by J. Beresford Fowler, a man who loved Shakespeare and tortured the playwright by the month with eccentric performances by a motley company whose doubts and bores seemed to have been cobbed together from old curtains.

The stage was so small that entrances were effected from behind the back flat, which swelled and trembled as each character prepared to enter, so that surprise was impossible and the arrival of the ghost painfully palpable. He came on to laughter, and spoke his lines through a dia in an inverted rathhish hum, arousing vibrations of pity rather than terror.

Coloured ribbons looped down low from the flies, presumably intending to suggest the parody of Hamlet. In the duet scene, when the rogues of unclattered against each other, Hamlet raised his weapon high, it became entangled, and suddenly the duellists were bestowed with streamers and, to laughter, had to march their way free.

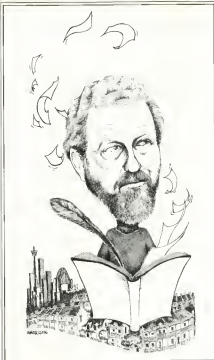
By the time I'd reached the University of Melbourne in 1958, verse drama was the fashionable mode

Christopher Fry dangled us with *The Lady's Not For Burning*, T. S. Eliot bored us with *Murder In The Cathedral*, and Maxwell Anderson in America and Douglas Stewart in Australia tried to convince us that the low life was poetical too. Anderson's *Winter* had gangsters talking at verse, and Stewart did something similar with *Ned Kelly* who, as he fell in his ploughshares with a thump that shook the boards of Melbourne University's Union Theatre, had some difficulty enouncing his pentameters. It was enough to convince me that contemporary verse drama was, like the R. G. Menzies Humanities Building or the Catholic Family Planning Centre, a contradiction in terms.

In the early 1990s, the most exciting theatre could be found at the Amps, South Melbourne, run by, and whenever possible starring, Frank Thring. We saw Lorca and Jonson and Sophocles and Anouilh. I used to go with my friend Desmond O'Grady, and we'd walk along the beachfront afterwards arguing about Where Theatre Was Heading.

And if it wasn't in the direction of verse drama, then where? The poetic theatre of Giraudoux and Anouilh? The ecstasies of Arthur Miller? The famed symbolism of Tennessee Williams?

What in fact happened, in the mad-



films, was that theatre tended to split into two opposed conventions. On the one hand *Look Back In Anger* and *Sweeney Of The Sevenpenny Doll*. On the other, *Waiting For Godot* and Ionesco's *The Chairs*, gritty realism versus the theatre of nihilism, characters lost in metaphysical space. I saw Lawler's *Doll* in 1955, and

though in historical terms it represented a breakthrough — an immediately successful Australian play by an Australian author with an Australian cast — it provided admission rather than ejection to me. It was a well-crafted piece of realism presenting Australian working-class characters within a

convincing frame. The middle class audience emitted continual delighted gasps of recognition — not of themselves, but of the rough-diamond types that in those days still largely had Carlton to themselves.

I can still recall the fissions that swept through the theatre as the sounds of forbidden words — bastard, bloody, bigger — words that only seven years before, in Sumner Locke Elliott's *Rainy Season*, had to be changed, under threat of police prosecution, to stinker, mug and dinner.

It was rather Osborne's *Look Back In Anger* that gave new life to the realistic convention. The exciting thing about its protagonist Jimmy Porter was his savage articulateness: what Reno and Harney, the characters of *The Doll*, can't get across, roars out in a aside in *Look Back In Anger*. Osborne did what the verse-dramatists failed to do — rediscovered a vital theatrical language. Words were once again poured out on the stage, violent and scorching and Elizabethan in their energy.

This isn't the place to analyse the peculiar chemistry that combined and combusted into an indigenous Australian drama in the late sixties. Brecht and Pinter obviously have to go into the mix, as would the revival of the vaudeville tradition, as well as the two conventions I have been discussing. But one thing is apparent: realism, though its death is regularly proclaimed, is still with us, rigorous and alive — realism condensed and intensified as in Heisthete William's *Harrold's Last Half Hour*, Barry Kofie's *Gunsie Stainer* or David Mamet's *American Buffalo*.

As Tom Wolfe says about fiction, the introduction of realism in the eighteenth century was like the introduction of electricity into machine technology: once it's there, it's hard to do without. It's there adapted, transmuted, but still speaking in Pinter and in Brecht, *Makropulos*, *Reel* and *Travelling North* are wired to it, it propels the scenes along in my most recent play, *Managawa*, currents of it, I feel sure, will persist in the future, powering more intense and crystallised theatrical forms. Having now made a pronouncement at the kind I warned against at the outset, I'll stop.

AUSTRALIAN OPERA

In David Guger's After months of unrelenting antagonism behind the scenes at the Australian Opera, the departure in mid-October of general manager Peter Borynge was hardly a bolt from the blue

Rather, it could most aptly be described, perhaps, as depressing confirmation of the unfortunate fact that the complex power struggles within the top echelons of the national company are anything but over.

The well-publicised conflict between Borynge and his musical director, Richard Bonynge, is merely symptomatic of a wide-ranging administrative conflict. In itself it is so typical of major performing companies—particularly opera companies, as to be hardly worthy of passing mention. Indeed, controlled tensions between artistic and business considerations are no doubt a good thing insofar as they represent a striving to achieve the best possible artistic result within the available economic parameters. The trouble with the Australian Opera is that the tensions and conflicts are not tempered by a sense of unity and corporate purpose.

Nobody would suggest that a general manager—be, for that matter, a musical director—should spend his entire working life in one spot, yet the turnover at the top of the AO has been so rapid that it has simply not been possible for any incumbent to contribute as much as he ought to have been able to the development of the company. Three musical directors (Calle Felix Cifare and Edward Downes before Bonynge) and three general managers (Donald McDonald and John Weather before Borynge) have already paraded by during the 70s, and now we are faced with the prospect of yet another search for a new general manager and yet another disruptive transitional period while he attempts to turn his ideas into realities.

In achieving the delicate balance that is a fully professional opera—compiling working at top efficiency—and hence producing the best

possible product within the available resources, the most vital ingredient must be a harmonious working relationship between the two men at the top—the artistic head and the administrative one.

Given a reasonably harmonious working relationship between these two vital operators of any opera company, expertise and timing ought to be attuned relatively amicably, but finally, if it comes to the crunch, the general manager must have the power to overrule his musical director in those vital areas of management. If he does not have that power, he is not in fact general manager.

All indications are that Borynge took on the general management of the Australian Opera two years ago in the expectation he would have a free rein to implement his policies and not fully realising how formidable an obstacle Borynge would prove to be—as much for the possibility he might slump off, it proved, and take his illustrious wife Joan Sutherland, with him as for any rational arguments he might throw up against Borynge's plans.

Clearly, Borynge favours the sort of bel canto repertory his wife sings so masterfully, doesn't much care for such late romantic black-boxers as Wagner's *Ring* cycle and was a major factor in the decision to postpone the AO production which was to have begun this year and was so dear to Borynge's heart. Clearly the AO Board has failed to arbitrate effectively as between the two, most culpably by failing in the first place to lay down clearest areas of responsibility as between them.

Both men being human, there have also been other lesser accusations to be levelled with some justification by supporters of each against the other of Borynge, for instance that his artistic judgement is clouded by emotion,

that he has in some cases preferred mediocrity to the best available talent when casting operas, of Borynge, that he has been too aloof and brusque in his working relationships to stimulate a sense of teamwork within the ranks of the AO, and that he has sometimes been insensitive to the wishes of his board.

Important as they are, Sutherland and Borynge are far from the only major international opera talents with an Australian connection. Why, for instance, has Yvonne Minton not appeared in opera since her stunning *Ottomans* in *Die Rosenkavalier* in 1972? Why is there a six-year gap between Sir Charles Mackerras' 1973 *Magnificence* and this year's *Jenny and the Captain*? Why has Edward Downes not returned here to conduct since Borynge replaced him as musical director? Why has the brilliant tenor Luciano Pavarotti not returned to Australia since 1961 why have Domingo, Carreras, Horne, Cabellé, etc never appeared with the AO?

Ironically, the immense differences in the nature of their two jobs has meant that Borynge's achievements and failures are a good deal lower profile than Borynge's. Much of his job is in the realm of long-term advance planning, for instance, where merits are not proved or disproved until at least a year after the event. In certain areas, though, Borynge has been an undeniable success: in particular, in the realm of co-operation with the regional companies—both in terms of the joint co-production seasons in Queensland, South Australia and Victoria involving the Australian Opera and a State company; and in terms of production behind-the-scenes co-operation in other areas as well as an improved physical touring presence of the AO itself outside Sydney.

In recent weeks there have been depressing signs of increasing intransigence in all quarters of Australia's opera world like long-standing members of a new professional company in Melbourne (to give vent in practical terms to Australia's displeasure at getting the short end of the stick in the AO physical presence stakes) have been ousted, this time featuring Sir Charles Mackerras as musical director-elect and even briefly, the AO's ousted Hommings as general manager.

In the face of considerable criticism, both in the letters columns of the daily press and in ABC television reports (on *Nationwide*) — some of it quite telling — the board of the AO has maintained an inflexible aloofness that appears increasingly to signal an unreal sense of its own infallibility.

Such polarisation of attitudes as now seems to be more and more prevalent within Australia's burgeoning but at best adolescent opera world may yet prove to be catastrophic (as far as the survival, let alone the development of the art form in this country is concerned). To date, the only sane course has been followed: concentration of funds available for the most costly of the performing arts in one city — Sydney. That it happened to be Sydney, and not Melbourne, is an accident of history, and in particular of the crazy saga of the Sydney Opera House: this extravagant papered-on then became reality largely for basic political reasons combined with an understandable, if perverse, unwillingness to admit the folly of starting it in the first place.

But no one dares say that the Sydney Opera House, important as it is as a performing arts complex and costly as it was to build, has not only put Australia on the world cultural map but has also been an enormous stimulus to the performing arts in this country. In another day, the Melbourne Arts Centre might have provided such a focus, but despite its practicality (itself no doubt stimulated, in part at least, by the impracticability of the Sydney Opera House) it cannot hope to rival the Opera House as a symbol of the urban Australia.

The major Melbourne-based company which must come and soon

should not suddenly spring into existence in an atmosphere of hostility to the AO. The obvious next forward step in the development of opera and music theatre in Australia is for the Australian Opera to subside gracefully, over a period of years, into the waters of the Sydney Opera — a title which has often already been hailed as a sin against by opera-lovers in other States. At the same time, a performing institution of equal — or near-equal stature — must gradually evolve in Melbourne, to be followed, in due course, by other major companies in Adelaide and Brisbane and maybe eventually in Perth and Hobart.



Richard Borgege

Logically these companies would evolve from the State companies in each of the capital cities, but in the absence of a viable existing company, perhaps one or two might have to come into existence in the first place through cellular division from the national company. Nothing could be more potentially disastrous for the cause of serious musical theatre in this country than to have a de-or-dis struggle develop between an infant company in Melbourne and a nominal national company deprived of effective managerial leadership based in Sydney.

Such a struggle would at the best set the cause of opera in this country back to Square One of 25 years ago, at worst it could result in the Friar

Government, not notably pro-arts at best, washing its hands of opera altogether and leaving it to sink or swim solely on the life support systems vouchsafed by State sources. Inevitably, because top-class opera must have big subsidy to survive, the world-class performing institution that is the Australian Opera as it now exists would disappear.

And in the process a whole generation of performing artists — the solo singers, the orchestral musicians and chorists, the major stars and conductors, designers and directors, who have been lured here (or back here) in the 1970s — would yet again be driven away from Australia.

Like many other Australian opera-lovers, I couldn't care less who is on the board of the Australian Opera, who gets a knighthood or doesn't; who is musical director or even general manager. I do care, though, about the survival of a company which has brought so much pleasure to so many people, and opened so many new cultural horizons to Australian audiences in the past few years.

And I believe I am putting forward the view of most opera-lovers in this country when I plead for the present board of the AO to stop being so arrogant and inward-looking, and the Melbourne offshoot rush to stop being so paranoiacal, and Borgege to accept that any one man's artistic heresies, even his own, cannot be permitted to dictate artistic policy for an aspiring major national cultural institution. When I plead for the infusion of some operatic sense into the hot bed of petty jealousy and intrigue that so overwhelmingly dominates opera in Australia just now.

Now though it is to see so much of two noted operatic Australians as Nathaniel and Borgege, it is even more important that the Australian Opera have collective managerial control based on broader heresies — particularly in the vital areas of choice of repertoire — than Borgege as so far demonstrated he possesses as musical director. Hommings seemed to have these heresies, and it was a tragedy to lose him before he had a reasonable chance to prove what he could do given an unequivocal mandate to manage with as any effective executive must possess.

THEATRE/ACT



By Roger Patterson/State Rep.

The obvious and the ambiguous

AUGUSTUS DOES HIS BIT THE BOAT

By Solman Hoars

Augustus Does His Bit In The Boat, Brisbane Theatre

September 1978

Director: Anne Griffiths Smith. Stage Manager: Pat

Heathcote

Augustus: John Cullis. Boatmen: John Pender, Tim

Gray, Jimmy Ogilby

Choreography:

Mr. Cost by Jill Shawyer. Brisbane Theatre Company.

Augustus Theatre Centre, A.C.T. Opened 24 September

1978

Director: John Pender. Stage Manager: John Cullis

Sol: Pat Gahan. Mary: Pat Heathcote. Brian: Richard

Glenn. Sam: Susan Swanton.

A.P.P. (P.A.S.S.)

A.P.P. (P.A.S.S.)

Of the first two plays in Brisbane Theatre Company's current season of three local theatre productions in the Brisbane Theatre foyer, Australian Jill Shawyer's *The Boat* is a far bigger choice than George Bernard Shaw's *Augustus Does His Bit*. The latter opened the season and no matter how relevant and entertaining for the British bureaucracy of World War I to see a stand-up of one of their ones (in Shaw's own words "their problem was how to win the war with Augustus on their backs, well-meaning, brave, patriotic but obviously being well-informed, sensible and dangerous") the play now seems rather trivial and just not funny enough.

It's not that bungling or pulled-up public servants are unknown to us. Nor did the agent Sol (John Cullis as Lord Augustus) Highgate and John Pender as Richard, his sole and entire staff are more than

competent and effectively exploit the initial confrontation of males are ideas of order, discipline and propriety versus the more immediate needs of daily living, grilling on with it. War or now. Searchers want his rise in salary.

The war and order in the dialogue and manner created by the two actors within the play for a while, as does initially the entry of the mysterious lady, we the audience, assume to be a sign. She is played with force, flatter and obvious mannerisms by James Ogilby, both to march and to seduce the reluctant Augustus. The lady, however, is only after military secrets in order to win a bet. It becomes rather tedious in the end. Perhaps a tighter direction in the second half might have helped.

That the play is by Shaw would draw an audience. Other than that, it seems hardly reason enough to do in judging by audience response when I saw this lot of theatre history.

The comedian and mad are inherently dramatic. In *The Boat* Jill Shawyer explains this, as well as the theatrical notion of having her main character, Sol, sitting in a red room in the middle of the stage. He lost his balance after returning from a fishing trip to find that despite thirty years of faithful service the boss's son is now spring permanently in his own suit. He was retrieved without notice. Now he goes fishing in the living room.

It is a well-crafted play, the kind that gives one the slightly disturbing feeling that it has followed a script, often one that works quite well. Perhaps it is that the bones of the structure are showing too much for a naturalistic mode.

In less than forty minutes we are given lyrical passages on fishing, politics, an

unfolding of the past, credible characters, a build-up of conflict reaching a dramatic climax, and a quiet resolution at the end with a hint that the boat may have to be speed away for good this time. Both play and production leave us guessing as to what stylistic realm we are in for quite a while, as Sol remembers on past fishing trips, poems around the boat and is assisted in the game by his wife Mary. They could almost be in Alice country. This is very effective use of stylistic ambiguity.

What I find less effective is the resolution of Sol's mental state through the apprehension caused by an impending visit of the son's new girlfriend and the slightly awkward settling of the relationship, especially through a dialogue between mother and son. The poem's weakness both in play and performance is in the somewhat crudely performed analysis, the son's girlfriend a social worker who has studied psychology and knows it all.

Pat Gahan who has given Canberra some very fine performances recently, including the main role in Rossetti's *The Flower World*, makes the character of Sol not only totally convincing, but gives great assurance and subtlety to the interpretation, allowing for some ambiguity as to how aware he is of what is going on when confronted by the well-meaning but insensitive attempts of the son's girlfriend to crush his dream world. Director John Pender has wisely downplayed the elements, some where Sol is aroused to raise a knife at the girl and has opted for a less than clear-cut approach to Sol's actual mental state up to that point. This makes the question "Mental care or mental institution?" all the more dramatically interesting, in terms of the play and not just a mental care argument per se.

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THEATRE/NSW



State Rep./Lucy Wagner, Exec. Editor

Recognition and the lack of it

FLEXTIME
DISCOVERING AUSTRALIA/
RENE TROUVER

By Lucy Wagner

Playscript by Roger Hall. Music Valley Theatre Company. Civa Playhouse, Newcastle NSW. Opened 23 September 1979.

Director: Terence Clarke. Designer: John Woodland. Lighter: Niall McHugh. Alan Gormley.

John Robert Alexander, Jim Wilkinson, How Allen Barker, David Under Crowther, M. Dwyer, Michael Tapp, Michael Jonathan Higgins, Webb, Tim Hale. (Professionals)

Discovering Australia: The Sydney Finale of Rene Trouver by John Moore. Civa Theatre Company. Orange, NSW. Pennington NSW. Opened 28 September 1979.

Director: Peter Kingsman.

Light: Robert Menzies. Cost: Byron. Barber. Foster. Stephen Davis, Andrew Jones.

(Professionals)

Two companies fighting for audiences: the Hunter Valley Theatre Company in Newcastle and the Griffin Company in Sydney, have mounted very different kinds of production in an effort to draw the elusive public. HVTC has put on the popular office comedy *Flextime* by N.T. writer Roger Hall, while Griffin has mounted two shorts by new writer (start) John Stone, obscure comedies on the human condition.

Flextime actually implies, looks at life in the office, in fact a public service stories department, but for the purposes of most people any office. Not however, in any case, the play is written with an inbuilt facility for including local reference of the "fish-in-the-pond" nature, a useful quality



Robert Alexander (Allegory in the MTC's *Flextime*). Photo: Tom Rapson-Cox

in a small community.

Hall has been called New Zealand's answer to David Williamson, but though much of the comedy is well-observed and the laugh lines very witty, the play's commentary and structure are weak compared to Williamson's work. Any development takes place off stage in the private lives of the characters rather than in their relationships on stage, with each resolving a personal problem by the end. However, as types they are immediately recognisable and Terence Clarke's production maximises the play's great draw card: recognisance.

Robert Alexander in the central role of John, office vet who lurches behind the net, gives an excellent and finely balanced performance, filling in the gaps in character that the script leaves bare. Alan Barker makes the Welsh immigrant How an agreeable and teasing figure, and the compulsory affair with the tap dancer (Claire Crowther) a believable piece of escapism.

Viv Rooney's great talent lies in always appearing to play himself and here gives another disarmingly naturalistic performance as Jim, a narrow-minded, every-going fiver who gets what's coming to him.

The fact that an analysis of *Flextime* inevitably falls into appraisal of the talents of individual actors is symptomatic of its formula, but for all the play's defects Terence Clarke's direction brought forth some fine creative work from the cast and makes the evening for all its laughs and entertainment.

John Woodland's set made good use of the very small Playhouse stage, unobtrusively, fitting in box desks and suitably reflecting the archetypal office environment to house its archetypal

occupants.

If John Stone's *Discovering Australia* attempted to parody some archetypes (second rate, winging poem vulgar Australian, simple aboriginal) its motives for so doing remain obscure. Its general tone and bareness the Englishman joins up with the stereotyped Australian and pseudo aboriginal in an early 19th century attempt to cross the Blue Mountains to the arctic. In spite of recognisable names the expedition has little to do with historical fact and the amusing personality clashes have no further point than the nationality joke, but on one night one stage exemplifies this: the Englishman's desire to buy a chamber orchestra to listen to in a dark room concerned with the Australian's crude and raucous singing ("that's mine") and the aboriginal's vicious blowing of the didgeridoo.

The *Grande Parade of Rene Trouver* was workshoped at this year's Playwrights' Conference, where, like *Rosale* and others, it was well received in partial production but seemed unable to live up to promise in full light.

Unfortunately Robert Menzies did not reach the heights of Barry Davis's performance and detracted from the satire and the character by uncontrolled overacting. Rene Trouver, French immigrant and private investigator is a happy misanthrope but his invocations of Sartre and Camus do little to raise the level of comic philosophy that comic wrapped in thriller style.

The Griffin Theatre Company's resources may be small but the staging of these two plays showed a lack of imagination that again a new coo well for a new professional company hoping to break into the competition for part of the Sydney audience.

Fast and furious

SWEENEY TODD, OR THE DEMON BARBER

By Barry O'Connor

Sweeney Todd adapted by **Max Wilford**, songs by **David Manowitz**, as *The Barber and the Demon or Fun at Hell*. *Opened 2nd October 1979*

Director: Kevin Jackson, **Designer:** Arthur (Archie) Wilson, **Hall Sponsors:** organised by Ron Macken, **Choreography:** Leigh Chambers, **Music Director:** Philip Rogers and Tania Connell, **Wigs:** Lucille, **Costs:** Andrew, Patricia Grealy, Mary-Jane Stewart, D.J. Annandale, **Light:** Peter Abington, **Services:** Todd: Ron Macken, Max: Joseph, John Nemes, Johna Rigg, Alan Best, Colleen Jones, **Set:** William Wilson, **Poster:** Kingston, *(Photo's on p. 10)*

Sweeney Todd has left his native Fleet Street for the Bankstown Crown Hall where the 'Demon Barber' has found a temporary home in a Q-Theatre restaurant production. Sandwiched between music hall and singing entertainments in line between Muzak eggs and apple strudel, the traditional melodrama - no, it's not the

Screen bondform musical - has been given a local flavour in this offbeat adaptation of the Sweeney saga, by Q-theatrical Max Wilford, with songs of the Lionel Bart kind composed by David Manowitz.

Sydney's Rocks area in the middle of the last century is an accommodating setting for the legend of the barber (Ron Macken) who shed up his customers and got rid of the evidence in the pits baked by his haggish common and now-deer neighbour, Mrs. Lovett (Gae Anderson). What could be more Australian, we are asked, than to witness the birth of the great national musical production dramatised on the stage before our very eyes - complete with lashings of native sauce!

Kevin Jackson's direction promises one and a half hours of almost continuous choruses, choros and razzmatazz, scored delectably. The pace is fast and furious thanks to the assistance of a revolve stage and, when the 'praiseworthy' (former and mischevous) music are better run in, I suspect the production must have to depend on heavily on the power of Wilford in the role role for so thrills, chills and surprise.

Most of the actors seemed happy in the

obvious and rather vague style of commonly associated with melodramatic playing; they acted boldly rather than over played their parts, hoping to get as good from the audience as they give it. Often this worked, as when Alan Best's Tobias was making yet another decision to eat yet another one of those pigs. But generally, whether the audience's sympathy was deserved or obligatory was a question I kept asking throughout the evening. A costume MC during the music hall warm-up failed to elicit the right kind of benevolent aggression for better than mechanical bows and bows.

The show is billed as 'a complete night out', which does sound rather like a paraphrase of Barry Humphries' *Remorse* signature line. But it is good value - \$10 for theatre dinner dancing inc. - if you like that kind of thing. However, since melodrama is so much a part of our theatre experience now, because of the restaurant theatre is a real time for someone to do for melodrama what Peter Hall's *The Revenger's Oath* did for the comedy of manners! That is, search beneath the stock's conceit for the reality which history and historians have long harped.



Poster Kingston, Gae Anderson, Ron Macken, Joe Jones, John Nemes, Mary-Jane Stewart and Alan Best in the Q's *Sweeney Todd*



Elizabeth Alexander as Emma in *Betrayal*

Chilling vision

BETRAYAL By Robert Pegg

Area of his Harold Pinter, Melbourne Theatre Company at the National, Sydney 1976. Opened 17 October 1976 after previous first seen at Canberra. Drama John Kananis, director, Ranga Mollath. Emma Elizabeth Alexander, Jerry, John Nathan, Robert Neil Fitzpatrick, Walter Edward Hoppe. (Athenaeum)

Pinter the master of opacity and ambiguity, his single-handedly elevated the prose in modern drama to a par with the music and colloquy of the Elizabethans. His concern with what goes on between sentences leaves his plays with only one answer to a myriad of questions: confusion, confusion and a multiplicity of possibilities in relation to his work is the result.

Then *Betrayal*. The technique remains: sparse language framed by pauses and unframed with the significance, like poetry framed by blank paper. But the words themselves are much less lyrical and lacking in rhythm compared to those of *The Caretaker* or *Landscape*; they are even brutal. The situation, the classic love triangle, is apparently all too easily categorised.

The people belong to London's elite as a publisher, Robert has wife and a gallery owner, Emma, and Jerry, a writer's agent, the only variation is that their story is told backwards, beginning with a meeting of the lovers two years after the end of the affair sparked by a fight all night

discussion between husband and wife.

From there, in this richly detailed tempo, a shift more or less steadily backwards through the significant moments: one summer of the London night in 1977 Jerry discovers Robert has known for years and thoughtfully facts his best friend's replacement, Jerry and Emma 1975, in the flat as parents' dinner and work provides a let-out 1974 all three together Jerry unaware all is revealed, Emma keeping up the social mask, and Robert using the ropes of squats to convey almost humanitarian intent, 1973, Venice when Robert discovered and in London the subsequent meetings Emma and Jerry Robert and Jerry when the discovery remains undiscovered 1971, afternoon delight to the flat and 1968 where it all started.

Is there a boring story told backward to give it interest? This being Pinter we look for more, more even than the evil thought that this offering might be the epitome of a certain well-publicised affair.

John Kananis' masterly direction gives the play a style and precision which goes beyond the naturalistic version of Peter Hall's (National Theatre London) premiere. The set in a central gay is composed of screens and angular furniture which moves on grooves into various configurations for different settings. Imprecise is the coldy gay idea of affairs as part of the very mechanics of modern day life.

Affairs lead to betrayal — and here all the possibilities are met. Emma of course betrays husband Robert in the kitchen late one than she never be a home.

Husband and wife betray Jerry by not revealing Robert's knowledge of the latter years of the affair, Emma betrays Jerry twice, once by conceiving a child while he is in America, later by beginning the triangle again with a new lover, Casey, one of Jerry's writers. The chilling vision is of family life continuing with superficial calm, but founded only on a substructure of deceit, lies and betrayal.

It is probably to give this game full and general impact, why Pinter has taken an archetypal situation and peopled it with real stereotypes. Robert the man of outward calm and reserve whose politeness almost condones the latest moral rearing at his party in his bedroom. Neil Fitzpatrick convincingly captures his repulsive surface but inner disturbance. Jerry drunkards cladded in his first advances, striving to drink and dagger-driven, then distraught when they are shown to have failed. John Nathan never loses the passion in the character's great of hand, maintaining the balance between sex on the side and irredeemable family commitment. And Emma, the liberated woman who seeks sexual pleasure separately from family involvement, as played by Elizabeth Alexander disarmingly straightforward but one must to trust in her telethinks.

The flashback made allows a gradual check to the facts first presented at once including Pinter's long-standing theme of the paradox in memory here, and deftly any thought that this might have been a momentous affair.

As with Kananis' composition the drama will convince whether the play is based on a less material restraint. I like the music.

THEATRE/NT

Suicide season plays

METAL CAGES, PLAY STRINDBERG, REDFELLOWS

Alan Youngson

Learning How to Fly in West Cotes by John Matheson. World premiere by Glasgow Theatre Group. Opened 14th September 1979. Bureau Main. Director: Robert Kember. Set: Alan Debenham. Cost: Kathleen Clithero, Jill Fisher. Technical: Robert Kember, John Strindberg. (Professional Amateur)

Pha Strindberg by Friedrich Dürrenmatt. Touring production by Stage Company of Adelaide. Opened 24th September. Bureau Main. Director: David Debenham. Set: Alan Debenham. Cost: Kathleen Clithero, Jill Fisher. Technical: Robert Kember, John Strindberg. (Professional)

Redfellow by Barry Oakley. Glasgow Theatre Group. Bureau Main. Opened 14th October 1979. Director: Tom Pauling. Design: Peter Dean. Paul Costumes: Sharon McInnes, Carol Cameron. Helen Marshall (H) Actor: Tony Peacock. (Amateur)

With the annual build up to the War (wonder) Season the theatre fare in Glasgow during the past month has tended to reflect this climatic atmosphere: intermingling isolation, separation, loneliness and death - especially in the sphere of marital relations.

First, and most disappointing, was the world premiere of Dürrenmatt's new comic and past Alina Matheson's *Learning How to Fly* in *Metal Cages*. Director Robert Kember has attempted to stage a combination of her poems (*Sex is a Fiddle*, *War*, sketches (*What you hold dear and I want* (*Rev. Semanov*) and radio plays (*Shakespeare is a Very Precious Thing*) through readings, recitations and actions on a 'theatrical' stage. Despite the enthusiasm of the cast to display the range of moods from desperate agony to bawdy comedy, the monotony of the theme - learning how to cope with the confinement and relative freedom of our caged minds and bodies - has hampered home and museum, which left one wondering whether the material would have been better left on the page than stage.

In contrast *Pha Strindberg* cleverly adapted by playwright Friedrich Dürrenmatt from August Strindberg's classic tragedy, *The Dance of Death* transfers to the stage a one-act comedy

in twelve scenes.

Imagae Alice, a failed actress (Deborah Latta) being married to Edgar, a failed army captain (David Haythornthwaite) and living on an island for 25 years. Wouldn't you be disenchanted to recognise any good points in the other? Add a visit by Alice's ex-lover-cousin Kurt (Ron Rodger) and the result is a tag wrestling match in which the combatants learn how to joke and come to terms with their intertwined relationships: social positions, health, money and problem of growing old in a

is not the only game-player in the marriage. Not only has she been deeply preoccupied not to be known about Paul's affair, she has been having an affair herself, with his literary rival and best friend, Bill Butler (Tony Peacock).

Fortunately for us the playwright does not shy away from confronting the serious as well as the comic implications of this situation. The match is played out, through, it seems, all possible moves, with satisfying dramatic logic, exhausting the possibilities for the players in this



Helen Marshall (Kurt) and Sharon McInnes (Paul) in 1979's *Redfellow*.

death, but hilarious situation. Director Brian Debenham, of the Adelaide Stage Company, carefully orchestrates his use of performers to leave us with a feeling of optimism for marriage.

By way of comparison is the comedy-tragedy of the message a trust in Barry Oakley's *Redfellow*. What opens is a comic scene with husband Paul (Sharon McInnes) brought along to domestic violence, literary, as opposed to close drawing a picture of a tired marriage and middle aged sex, is unexpectedly broken when Carol (Helen Marshall) reveals that Paul

situation.

In the moment of truth at the end it is clear that Paul has learnt nothing and Carol has been left with nothing, that the 'love' which now relates them is an anomalous complex of convenience habit and obligation.

Tom Pauling's unfashioning direction brings out the honesty and reality of these conflicts by balancing both the humorous and the serious as the Redfellow (see the fact that separation intensifies loneliness even isolation will not be their lot - we season it so).

THEATRE/QLD



State Rep./Don Batchelor

Safe one-acters

GOING BANANAS CHRISTIE IN LOVE

Roslyn Atkinson

Going Bananas, Remains by Richard Bristow. The Company, 15 Company, 15 La Bode Brisbane Qld. Opened 27 September 1979.
Director: John Milson. Designer: Mike Rodgas. Stage Manager: David Milson.
Cost: Duncan Watt, Pat Thomson, Steve Hancock, Geoff Cartwright.

(Professionally)

Christie In Love by Howard Brenton. TN Company at La Bode Brisbane, Qld. Opened 27 September.
Director: John Milson. Designer: Mike Rodgas. Stage Manager: Duncan Watt. Lighting: Ian Paskin.
Christie: Geoff Cartwright. Landable: Steve Hancock. Spook: Duncan Watt.

(Amateurishly)

Perhaps our expectations of the TN Company have been too high too soon. At last we had an alternative professional theatre company in Brisbane committed to performing major new plays — particularly Australian plays — using the manifold resources of local talent, a company to fill the gap between the Poplar Theatre (Sydney's theatre to the people outside commercial theatre) and the commercial. But what a heavy start with *Broke and Tied* Sheppard, the year faded away with small casts and ironically excepting *Bugs* David smaller plays.

The TN Company has presented no fewer than five Australian plays, but all one-acters with few pretensions to profundity. The present offering is *Going Bananas*, an odd collection of two entertaining frothy pieces — Richard Rodham's *Remains* and Mid Pardon's *The Fly*. — and John Summons' relatively

serious *The Coroners Report*. Of these the *Fly* is undoubtedly the most successful as it unexpectedly flies through the absurd misadventure of a man who has apparently come home to tell his wife that he is to be promoted at work. The play, the actors, and the set change styles and meanings with panache but there's no bite, no questions left to worry as we draw off into the night.

Not so in the "underground" production of Howard Brenton's *Christie In Love*, which explores the motives and consciousness of the English murderer John (Roger) Christie as seen through the eyes of two of the investigating police. Christie is portrayed as an ordinary man, the policeman an ordinary man. All have a surface experience of normality and respectability, yet Christie's desire for women led him to kill and then casually assault them. The policeman's wonder lack of respect for women led him to be the defiler of duty himself and the sceptical judges of Christie's behaviour. In Brenton's view the morality as is tainted as the murderer himself. "Why," the young policeman halfheartedly wonders, "can't murderers be more like monsters?" There's a disarming dream sequence, our first view of Christie, where he masturbates while wearing a monster's head and pours out invective against women, which works

on the level of being his own destiny tale and also a view of himself as the police would like to see him: more like a monster, less like himself.

But again this work, which shocked ten years ago is now a standard away from the undergraduate experiments and its observations on cold mannered police sexual perversity in Maddyland do not contribute much to our own understanding of the police we're acquainted with. Perhaps the TN Company could be commissioning plays on the pervasions and motives which have helped to determine our own consciousness (Indeed Queensland history abounds with fascinating and morally ambiguous murderers such as Koppell who killed hapless train travellers on the Northern Mail between Brisbane and Rockhampton and hid their bodies out of an open window.)

It all comes back to what we expect of the TN Company. I must admit to continuing optimism, for they have some of the most able and energetic actors in Brisbane, they've been plagued with financial problems in the difficult first year, and John Milson has undeniably played it safe with productions he's done before. Let's hope 1980 will see this fine company of actors tackling some exciting and challenging material.



Duncan Watt and Pat Thomson in *Going Bananas*

Warana niceness

ON APPROVAL: A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

By Jeremy Ridgman

On Approval By Frederick Lonsdale. Brisbane Actors' Company. Qld. Opened September 1979.

Director: Bruce Davis. Design: David Lonsdale. Lighting: Ian Pridgen. Stage Manager: Ross Fern. Cast of *Midsummer Night's Dream*: Helen Allen, Elizabeth May, Michael Page, Margaret, Helen Hayle, Evelyn Torrey.

(Professional)

A Midsummer Night's Dream By Shakespeare. Queensland Theatre Company. Allent Park Theatre. Qld. Opened 24 September 1979.

Director: Alan Edwards. Design: Peter Cooke. Lighting: Derek Campbell. Stage Manager: Elise Kennedy. Music: Qld. Theatre Orchestra. Cast: Helen Allen, Evelyn Torrey.

Thomas: Oliver. Oberon: Robert van Marrewijk. Puck: Douglas Wedge. Titania: Queen. Bottom: Kenneth Lonsdale. Fairy: Greg. Demetrius: Frank. Goffield. Hermia: Reginald. Egeus: Peter. Geoffrey: Mark. Theseus: Noel. Lysander: Young. The Poet: Stanchoy. Michael: McAlister. Hippolyta: Tania. Juliet: Nicola. On. Heron: Suzanne. Bottom: Wilson. Fairy: Margaret. Fairy: Kenneth. Oberon: John. Qld. Opera Company. Director: Alan. Qld. State Company and Australian Youth Theatre.

(Professional)

Edna Everidge, I believe, has a song entitled "Niceness", a homage to that most nebulous and illused of human virtues. Frederick Lonsdale seems to have got there first. His 1927 comedy, *On Approval*, takes the daring step of having two engaged couples, one young, the other middle-aged, move to a Scottish country house for a trial marriage, the result being that one loathes each partnership discovers that their perspective upon it is just not nice. (There's no other word for it.) The curtain falls with the two parties left snowed up together in a semi-business hall, each the other's painful means of information.

Apart from wondering why Lonsdale should balance his four-hander with the assumption that as men grow older they become more likeable but that a mature woman a part or metaphorical shorthand, I found the play fairly inconsequential. The Brisbane Actors' Company's production is slick and winning, imparting a play and a reading which are certainly not there to be successful, these are script. One missed however the self-conscious stylisation that might have added lustre to the rambling dialogue. Lonsdale is no Coward and the tongue needs to rest confidently in the cheek if the play is to work today in an otherwise good cast, only Evelyn Torrey seemed to hit the right note with consistency.

The BAC have turned the curtain into the

world of boulevard comedy to coincide with Warana, Brisbane's arts festival and Manda-Gara, no doubt they hope to recoup some of the losses made by their more adventurous offerings earlier this year. The QTC's sponsor, A Midsummer Night's Dream, however, is being paraded far more overtly as the spectacle of the festival, the embodiment of Brisbane's own spirit of Cosmos.

It is, consequently, a production which tries to be all things to all men. Its lavish pooling of the talent and resources of all major state companies, every shop has been pulled out, from Mediterranean to balletic forms and from forests to a pack of neo-neo-stalagial daisies, and Shakespeare, here, has appears to get swamped in the middle. The assumption seems to be that Brook and Kott notwithstanding, *The Dream* is still the Bard's

mainstay price and type for the plucking.

Given the scale of the production, one can not help but admire the handling of some striking effects and the creation of some striking effects and the creation of the convincing. But such notes tend to stay and the more subtle delights, such as Robert van Marrewijk's majestic Oberon, are lost as a result. One is left with an aftertaste of suchness vulgarity, lost accompanied by a Puck who postures and camps his way through the play like an emperor from Les Carls. And who was a perfect natural setting, paired with noble Morton Bay Fig, laced up with a huge luminous blue net looking as more than one person married. Like a brown-up logo for a gas company? Small, as to be beautiful, especially in the "green world" of Shakespeare's comedies. But that's Warana for you...



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THEATRE/SA

Uneasy and uneven

TWELFTH NIGHT THE ENEMY WITHIN

By State Rep. Susan Yile*

Twelfth Night by Shakespeare, State Theatre Company, Playhouse Adelaide 3A, opened 14 September 1979

Director: Nick Knight, Designer: Hugh Coleman, Lighting Designer: Nigel Loring, Musician: Michael Foster, Stage Manager: Peter Keston, Oliver: Daphne Grey, Sir Toby Belch: Robert Griffith, Malvolio: Peter Carroll, Viola: Fiona Hodgkinson, Feste: Tony Pratt, Maria: Louise Williams, Lady: Christina James, Orsino: Wayne Arnold, Orsino's Servant: Catherine Raine, Jaques: Colin Ross, Sebastian: Nicky Chris Mahoney, Sebastian's Clerk: David Lee, Captain: Bill Austin, Antonio: Leslie Douglas, Antonio's Agent: Kevin Browning.

(Professional)

The Enemy Within by Guyana Murrell, Troop in association with Playbox, University Drama Centre, Adelaide 1A, opened September 1979

Director: David Young, Designer: Paula Carter, Stage Manager: Wendy Mulligan, Music: Catherine Williams, Anderson, Mrs Malvolio: the Kalds, Mrs Ploutz: Geraldine Heikham, Jaques: Chris Mahoney, Helene: Heather (Pina) Lee.

Since STC is soon to be in the hands of Kevin Palmer and Nick Knight, it is worth musing that the usual curiosity that one notes their work. *Twelfth Night* left me half-befuddled and anxious for the company's future.

The sets seemed to be the authentic reproduction of an Elizabethan ambience. Accordingly, we were faced with a significantly intricate and, I have no doubt, accurately researched set the interior of an Elizabethan mansion. But it overpowered the action, cramped the movement and focused oddly on a pair of double doors which were hardly used. Though the original *Twelfth Night* may well have been performed in such a space, one imagines it was not the actors' choice. Yet it is no absurd to create limitations in order then to strive against them.

Minimal lighting changes and flashily authentic (and expensive?) costumes only reinforced the sense of museum theatre. Olivia, in particular, was so hampered by the gargantuan layers of authenticity that she could do little more than sit, wafer-like, as if on display.

Many of the difficulties arose from the choice of actors. Chris Mahoney, already the victim of bad casting in *Macbeth*, gave Viola a youthful confidence, but she was aware of the tragic potential in the role

and, besides being physically unsuitable, needs urgent work on her vocal deft. As Sir Toby, Robert Griffith seemed to be reaching towards the role's complexities, but never quite making them. Linden Williams's Malvoio seemed uncomfortably from pragmatic formalism to an odd primness. Robert Browning was happier with Sir Antonio, as was Edna Hodgkinson with Feste (I only wish he could sing.)

The greatest error of measuring was Daphne Grey as Olivia. Her naturally figure made a mockery of Orsino's adoration and, still more, of Viola's awkward response, "too beauty truly blent". They might have got away with it by playing up to those extremes the older woman younger man idea, but the production took no risks of this kind. Such measuring is unreasonable in our only establishment theatre, I can readily think



Robert Griffith (Sir Toby Belch), Daphne Grey (Olivia), and Peter Carroll (Malvolio) in the STC's *Twelfth Night*. Photo: David Wilson

of several young Adelaide actresses who would have been more suitable for both leading parts.

Only Peter Carroll gave us a carefully studied characterisation in his intelligently mannered Malvoio. But even he could not overcome the quirks of direction which left him a slow-moving self-hating Puritan and a similarly slow-moving company. Contrast was gone, and with it much of the grounds for comedy.

There were high points. The circular letter was a masterly stroke as was Sir Antonio's all-yellow costume ("It's a colour she adores"). The idea of Fabian's supplanting Feste is one I haven't seen before and which neatly solves the problem of what to do with Fabian while confining the "Twelfth Night" theme. It needed more focus, however. I know some audience members who missed it

altogether.

In all, it was an uneasy night. Unhappy for the dancer, uneasy for the company. And, as if to confirm this, the performance I saw was splattered with slips and falls, a sure sign of lack of concentration, including an astonishing display of lost cues, misplaced words and forgotten lines from Bill Austin as the Sea Captain.

On a brighter note, *The Enemy Within* at the Red Shed lifted Troop from the indifference of their last few shows. A consistent acting style, atmosphere and sense of purpose gave this production a pleasing unity.

The play, by a British playwright of Polish parentage, is set in Germany during the rise and fall of Hitler's Third Reich. Taking a topical theme, it examines the choices made by several women in a male-dominated world. On the whole, it works well and thoughtfully evades the temptation to present the issue in black and white terms. There is, nevertheless, an unevenness in the writing which could do with some cutting.

A current dichotomy exists between the two halves. The first sets out the choices in detail, treating all with a freshness, even a naivety, which assumes no prior knowledge on our part. The second, which shows the consequences of each choice, immediately gives us credit for knowing a great deal about the situation (it did not give in the first half), it also introduces a natural element and begins on the edge of melodrama. But perhaps the play's main weakness derives from the fact that the women's choices are clear from the outset, so that any development is more a matter of circumstantial consequence than personal conflict.

Still, it was a satisfying evening, with Heine Burden giving a finely understated performance as the woman who resists. Her natural sincerity exposed the tension of the Kalds' portrayal of the other extreme, the woman who obeys. Caught between the two, as the play's chief focus for argument, Christina Anderson was most successful in her quieter moments, at other times, though her voice would rise to something bordering on a protest when which she found hard to vary. Geraldine Heikham displayed an unexpected versatility in her four small parts.

Director David Young has an eye for a striking image (I shall not soon forget the journey of the mother in her coat sitting in the rubble, humming a lullaby) and is not afraid of silence or emotion. He was let down, however, by the design, a serious misuse of material and reality.

THEATRE/VIC



State Rep./Suzanne Spurrer

Nothing stinted

THE DAY AFTER THE FAIR

By Raymond Stanley

The Day After The Fair by Frank Harvey based on the short story *On The Border* by Thomas Hardy. Directed by Paul Hardy and The M.C. Elton in Royal Company of the Comedy Melbourne. First Night on September 11th.

Director: Frith Banbury. Design: Judith Parkinson. Author: Harbham. Script: Christopher Lee. Cast: Harbham, Patricia Kennedy, John Harbham, Deborah Kerr. Tech: Brian Smith from Lincoln. Music: Chris Brindley. Andrew McIlwaine. (Production)

Seeing the production of *The Day After The Fair* brings back memories of what "going to theatre" used to be like when it was an "event", and there was a sense of excitement in the air. The plays were far from perfect perhaps, but one was willing to overlook shortcomings in return for first class production and acting values that exemplified delinquency in writing. Neither did it seem necessary for a play to have a message as long as it provided enough entertainment.

Taken from a Thomas Hardy short story and set in an English West Country city in 1900, in six scenes *The Day After The Fair* depicts a situation where Edith Harbham's servant Anna has met at a fair a young gentleman named Charles, who has kissed her and arranged a further meeting. When he returns to London they agree to correspond. Anna, however, can hardly read, let alone write, and the letters are composed and penned by her mistress Edith.

Anna becomes pregnant and when informed of her condition Charles pays a visit and offers marriage, not out of necessity but because he genuinely believes

he is in love with the animal that could compose such beautiful letters. Edith who lives a dull life with her older husband and her sister Lotty, who is affected by the correspondence. Only after the wedding ceremony does Charles, who is a bachelor, learn who has really written the letters.

It takes considerable skills of cast and director to make this all seem plausible at the time. Perhaps playwright Harvey has kept too near Hardy's original and not left them more ample room for explanation of characters and motives with resulting conflicts but this never eventuates.

Audiences of course are being drawn by Deborah Kerr in the main role of Edith and the company does not in any way disappoint. Frequently she misreads me, vocally and in manner, of Anna's height, she possesses the same regal charm and graciousness. There is admirable backing from Lynette Curran as Anna, a truly outstanding performance, and Patricia Kennedy who, not missing one point, manages to make a fully rounded character of Lotty, and even accepts a little humor

into the part.

Andrew McIlwaine as Charles, is a rare but welcome appearance on stage, seems less assured than the ladies and on the first night a trifle stiff and stilted. Possibly this was due to first night nerves and undoubtedly after a few performances he would be more relaxed.

Nothing has been missed for Paul Hardy's first production since his occupancy of the Comedy, not least being the engagement of director Frith Banbury who, having directed the play's two previous productions with Deborah Kerr, gives it an overall West End gloss. It would have been easy to merely have had the actresses' sets and costumes copied, instead Kristian Fredrikson has been employed and his attractive designs add to the evening's enjoyment.

A nice touch at the payment was provision of free programmes to every member of the audience, on good quality paper and containing better lay-out and material than is normal, with "opening night" printed on the covers.



Deborah Kerr (Edith) and Patricia Kennedy (Anna) in *The Day After The Fair*

Intelligent and ambitious

MARSUPIALS

By Garrie Hutchinson

Marsupials by Barry Oakley Melbourne Theatre Company, Russell Street Theatre Melbourne Vic. Opened 5 October 1979

Director: Peter Mylie. Designer: Larry Rosewood. Lighting: Justin Kunk. Theme music: Gary Brown. Props: Max Gillies. Set: Carol Burns. Ties: Sean Scully. Cost: Agnes. Hair: Mark King. (Professionals)

Barry Oakley's forays into the area of comic non-avant-garde have led him into some pretty strange territories. Recall the humorous love and hate for Archbishop Mannix, the wicked ballooning of Santarina, the grotesque portraits of the nasty Minnie, the pompous affliction of Horace and Deloris (in *The Ship's Maw*) for instance. The real life, historical personages, somewhat disguised in the plays, mark a kind of historical revisionism that is one side of Oakley's work. Here the reddest works through fairly savage satire, moderated by a kind of compassion for the great and nasty. If he stuck the knife into Mannix, Minnie and the rest, he was offering them a leg up in the other hand.

The other aspect, seen in *RedFrida* a few years of inner suburban volatility, and now in *Marsupials*, is a concern with the private lives of Australian men. Why do Australians do what they do? Why are middle class, educated men and women (who go to the theatre now and again to had it all in one shape)? How does this kind of Australian relate to the larger Australian culture?

As always, Oakley has the considerable comic skills of Max Gillies at his service. In *Marsupials* he plays perhaps the most complex character Oakley has created. Frank is the husband of an unconsummated marriage. He plays the Australian to his wife's temptations, to the rival's successful expatriation. Frank is the last Australian middle class intellectual. Out of a job, losing a wife, into the house. He doesn't know what to think of himself, or why he should stay in Australia. He can't get over a fling his wife had with his pal, years before. He knows there's nothing he can do about the temptation that he of passion still represents, or about the temptation the now urbanised ex-Australian has become. He is unable to do anything to affect his world, so he hides, Lawson-like into the house.

The last image of the play, where the temper returns in a final effort to convince Frank that he should join his wife in England, is graphic. Frank refuses, and as the lights dim, shakes hands with an old

mate—friendship frozen on a meaningless, drunken gesture. That's all there is left for this Australian, for the culture he represents.

The wife, with her remembrance of previous pain, cannot cope with any more of Frank's inability to act. She wants more passion, and more conviction. She wants the heart of the heart. So, by the end of the play, knows the reason he more than a "friend" to Tom the tempter, but she can't get her job in London, while something might happen. Regrettably she leaves the known, a kind of expatriation of the soul. She too has no choice. And if it appears that she is the classic cultural emigrant will, it is the culture of her marriage that made her so.

The tempter, a woman in Australia now, a famed journalist in London, doesn't want to resume any relationship with the wife. He wants somewhere to sleep and an intimate view of the anatomy of the Australian site.

Because it's a play of types who don't relate terribly well, and a play of ideas

about being an Australian there aren't any of the emotionally satisfying feelings of "character" or meaning. It's an objective, argumentative sort of play with quite depressing conclusions.

Bruce Mylie's production could do with a bit more pace and sparkle. Sean Scully as the tempter Tom, could afford some more isolated moments, Carol Burns might try for some of the warmth and excitement she seems to have forgotten in the last play or two, and Max Gillies might find some more comedic devices to add to his well known repertoire.

Barry Oakley's urbane style is not as colloquially apt as Williamson's. He has a mind, not just on ear. On the other hand the pursuit of the poetic doesn't come off from time to time, and leaves the actors with some embarrassing lines, fortunately covered by the lights going down.

If the whole play just seems being played in the top drawer it makes because it is intelligent and ambitious. Would that more writers made the same mistake with the same skill.



Sean Scully (Tom), Max Gillies (Frank) in the MTC's *Marsupials*. Photo: David Parker



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THEATRE/WA



State Rep./Joan Ambrose

Then and Now in the Land of Oz

THE TIME IS NOT YET RIPE
THE FOOL ON THE HILL

By CHIT GILMAN

The Time Is Not Yet Ripe by Louis Essau. WAIC at the Hayman Theatre Perth WA. Opened 12 September 1979.

Director: Colin O'Brien. Designers: Philip O'Brien and Graham McLean.

Act: Joseph Quercione, Ivan King, Denis, Jennifer Moller, Sydney, Robert, Richard Williams.

(Perth only)

The Fool On The Hill by John Maitland. The Work, at the Wall Theatre Perth WA. Opened 13 September 1979. Director and Designer: Mike Mager. Musical: Robert Lawrence. Actor: Nigel Melburn. Film: Mager Mager. Props: Steve Mager. Richard Hamilton.

Actor: John Maitland. John, Peter Hardy, Joan Mager, Richard Maitland. Props: Maitland. Music: Phil Thompson.

(Perth only)

The time is not yet ripe and, I fear, will never be for Louis Essau's *The Time Is Not Yet Ripe* (1972) to be appended to that short but non-existent list of "classic" Australian plays. There is far too much second-hand Shaw and Wilde about both situation and dialogue in this very early, home-grown political comedy — which is not to say that it offers nothing but its historicity to critics and contemporary audience. Perhaps the most winning thing about the play is that Essau's satirical objects of sociopolitical criticism are as today: cynical politicians, an apathetic populace, grasping American visitors, female chauvinists and utopian reformers abroad. Nothing new under the Australian sun it seems.

Directed by Colin O'Brien for the WA



Act II, "The Time Is Not Yet Ripe" (Philip Maitland Smith)

Theatre Company and toured as yet another contribution to our seemingly endless sociopolitical shenanigans. *The Time Is Not Yet Ripe* featured some very strong performances. As the Prime Minister's daughter Denis, drafted by the Anti-Socialist good women's league to stand for election in opposition to the graver-societal (not) who happens to be her beloved, Jennifer Moller offered vivacity and intelligence; the latter no mean feat given the relative thinness of the role. She was well paired with Richard Williams, as Sydney Barrett, the radical shoe of the Establishment branch. He played with a relaxed expansiveness and geniality which complemented Moller's fry wit and brought credibility to a role stuffed with cliché.

Ivan King struggled manfully, and

against the odds of the script, for the whole of the first half of the play with the role of the PM Sir Joseph Quercione. In Act III however he found his feet, and brought the play alive with his delightful raucous harangue. This was genuinely funny, a little gem of shrewdly observed, finely timed, parodic performance.

A pleasing aspect of the production was the performance level attained by non-professional cast members, mostly Theatre Arts students from WAII. Sally Bester's stylish chairman, Miss Perkins, Donald Smith's intrepid socialist worker, Ronald Bromby's woodroosily charless, flannelled fool and Ross Morrison's vaguely Chalkbarnian Utopian idealist all contributed much to a smooth well-paced production.

Colin O'Brien's direction made the

most of the play's strong point, bringing the contemporaneity of the political satire to the fore while retaining the proper Edwardian ambience and deftly controlling the excesses of the comic subplot. It located the focus of the play in the lightly antithetical electrifying scenes of Act III, thus reinforcing the dated second-nature of Lincoln's first two acts, and bringing a sustaining energy to the end of the action.

No such centre to the action was found by Mike Morris in his production of local writer John Arden's "memory-play" *The Foot On The Mill*. To be fair to Morris, who contributed his usual flair for imaginative staging and stirring (some would say gimmicky) theatricality for this production, the lack of focus is intrinsic to the script. Arden's "historical nostalgia play" never quite makes up its mind if it intends to say something of a general nature about the 60's credibility and the difference decade of the 70's as measured by that perhaps illusory standard, or whether it really wants to be no more than an exercise in auto biography.

Arden's assumption of the lead role of Arthur McManus (the mainline sentimental whose boyhood recollections of a youthful night spent punting in a boat on a Quakerian hill generates what passes for the action of the play), does not encourage the notion of the play's search for a meaning beyond the personal.

What we got was a series of reminiscences punctuated by moments of vaguely appropriate Beatles tunes, performed largely in dust, and with taste and affection, by Steve Fendley and Paula Mazzella, and illustrated by back-projected images in the psychodrama of the scene. Lots of sound and sight, but precious little fury and all signalling.

Pat Skervington has the best line, as Doris, a middle-aged madame of the House on the Hill, and she made the best of them. Margaret Ansell's experience and intelligence helped to give a suggestion of credible personality to the semi-ferret where Joan Peter Hardy and Paula Mazzella had to wrestle with two very ill conceived "characters" whom I presume were intended to represent the 70's credibility as Arden sees it (or better doesn't see it). Hardy tried very hard to make something of the part but it was, understandably, beyond him. Paula Mazzella gave up attempting the responsible and concentrated instead on something she does very well indeed singing.

I think it is a pity that Morris who has been responsible for some of the most exciting and stimulating productions in this city over the past few years should have left at his parting-piece the left recently for film studies in America and

readily surrendering retirement, which not even his gift for imaginative staging could bring to life. At least there were some signs to look at (courtesy of R. Lawson) and of course, the odd tape of the Fab Four in full voice. The right was made worthwhile for me by the inclusion of John Lennon's magnificent wailing vocal intro to the early Beatles' class Mr Moonlight, I'd confess anything, even *The Foot On The Mill* to hear that.

Skill and professionalism

NO MAN'S LAND

Colin O'Brien

No Man's Land by Harold Pinter. National Theatre Company. Playhouse. Park St. Opened 2nd October 1979.

Director: Stephen Herek. Designer: Ian Russell. Lighting: Duncan Oak. Stage Manager: Christine Randall.

Host: James Booth. Speaker: Edgar McNally. Foster: Alan Bleasdale. Briggs: Alan Cassell. (Production)

Pinter aficionados - and I am a rabid one - can perhaps detect three areas of exploration in his plays. The first two are matters of thematic concern: the territorial wars/race syndrome explored in such



James Booth as Speaker in the National's No Man's Land

plays is *The Carrier* and *The Room*, and the psychic enlightening of interpersonal relationships seen in *The Room*, *Seven* and *Oh Tessa*. The third development was one of form: the shift to a more metaphorical, even poetic, dramatic form, dependent not so much on a series of dramatic actions as on the juxtaposition of images. It was the powerful emergency of

this last development which made *Londoners* and *Shower* so initially disappointing, and which moved me to explore them in only one way which counts, by putting the plays on.

No *Man's Land* seems to me to bring together all three areas. The entry of the old English class Host with the needy, sick, and mind-failed Hampstead intellectual Spooner has echoes of *The Carrier* (moved closer to Ragwort Park, the verbal shuffling and even shuffling-footing in the language Pinter personal bloodletting, and brooding over all it is a metaphor just out of reach. The combination of their images and movement tendencies might well suggest that these two stand on the brink of the 50's, waiting to be turned over to their own particular blades can idea I admit to having stolen from Alan Hay).

I was recently castigated in the latter columns of these pages for reviewing a play in the light of earlier production, but it is hardly possible to escape the memory of Peter Hall's original Gielgud Richardson National Theatre presentation. I was unhappy with John Hay's semi-annualism for that production, and was sorry to see it followed here. The text does not tell for it, and I would like to have seen an alternative approach tried.

Held onto your hat, but I preferred James Booth's performance of Host to that of Ralph Richardson, but over the past twenty years I have felt that Richardson rarely played other than an image of himself as retired colonel. James Booth's sense of timing and control of reflection supported an imposing performance. Both he and Edgar McNally handled Pinter's long speeches admirably. For all they appear to be shapeless and full of gratuitous pauses, Pinter's plays are very finely orchestrated, requiring the right control over by the demanded by Macart. Both the actors mentioned handled their parts superbly. Edgar McNally did not play for the solely dignity Gielgud achieved, but his more observant, even bringing Spooner is consistent with the text.

I am not sure whether it was the first night audience or the direction which made the play occasionally too noisy for my taste, but I think was to diminish to a degree the mastery of both the intense moods. Foster and Briggs, as Briggs, Alan Cassell played with the rebuke of a Pinter devotee, but I felt that Alan Bleasdale in the part of Foster was less at ease than his fellows with the rhythms and speech patterns that are the stuff of Pinter.

But these criticisms should be seen as merely marginal matters of discussion, on balance this was a beautiful performance, sustained chiefly by the skill and professionalism of the two actors playing the central roles.

INTERNATIONAL

Winter comedies

By Irving Wardle

With the approach of the British winter it is the annual habit of the Royal Shakespeare Company to rummage the godwin of theatre history and come up with some long-forgotten bit to keep the Aldwych audience warm until Springtime. As these shows regularly transfer and make a name for the RSC in the West End, and as critics sportingly refrain from slandering works for which no great artistic claims are being made, everyone is thus kept happy, with the possible exception of actors who may find themselves being dragged into unmythical song and dance routines.

The success of revivals like Richard O'Keefe's *World On A Wire* or Brian Cox Howard's *Satanstoe* depends above all on a sophisticated sense of time: the capacity to enter to design and move an old play within its own period while also meeting on the page between then and now. Hence the cold shouldering of C. K. Scott's revival of Ibsen and Kaufman's *The Man Who Came To Dinner* compared with the chosen the same authors aroused with *Over To A Feline* at the Aldwych. That piece, the first collaboration (1938) of the fabled partnership, tells the story of an out of work, cantabile man who rolls out to Hollywood to track film actors to speak. The comedy is partly an act of theatrical vengeance against Broadway's great competition, and partly a re-enactment of the "New Frontier myth" "the covered wagon": one of the team remarks "is slowly moving across the plains towards a marble swimming pool." Its period is also pre-empted at the birth of the talkies, which is no less an advantage to the Aldwych in 1976 than it was to the New Yorker in 30 years ago.

Tenor Numan even opens his production with a clip from *The Jazz Singer*, bravely trusting his actors to come through with something even funnier than the sight of Al Jolson reducing a pack of music critics to tears. The company do not let him down. For one thing, their Anna Leonovna and Eugene pastures are no less carefully designed than the Gold Room interiors of the *Silken Hotel* and chromo-plated studio elephants of John Napier's set, which it is fair to claim as the most stunning art deco folly yet to grace the



Maxwell Brown (Cantabile) and Gwen Nelson (Marie Feline in *The Case of the Cat's Revenge*). Photo: John Smith.

London stage. What we got is a comprehensive overview of the dramatic diary, with caps and ball-caps even ready to leap on pinning producers not kidding games (usually Laping's "Wants"), service biographies and interior photographs, and a whole working station on the studio floor with a sign-making busby taking direction from a Stockholm-style genius in jodhpurs.

The missing one are another matter. The joke here is one of crime character contrast between May, their leader, and George, the stooge. Smart as the is, May runs into a dead wall with his three godfless pupils who really put the studs under her nose (school). But George, the brainless innocent, winds up as crown prince of the labyrinth. Studious, critical, a series of apparently ghostly mistakes, every one of which turns the company a former. Whenever he gets to see their original masterly art, but you get the flavor of having seen it from Zoe Wamaker and Richard Griffiths performance which turns wondrously realistic through into the West Coast madhouse. Wamaker the sharp little number full of plans to beat the system, and Griffiths the blind deafened fool, signaling his new strains by clapping into voluminous phantoms, and not representing the lion's surprise when his impulsive purchase of 2,000 airplanes launches a voice for flying moose.

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Future Theatre happenings abroad

INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR-CUM- WORKSHOP ON MIMI, MOVEMENT AND GESTURE IN INDIAN THEATRE

Having been postponed to a later period, participants will now have the opportunity of witnessing the following two important cultural events:

1 National Drama Festival which is organized annually by the Rajya Sabha, and in which some of the most celebrated theatre groups of the country stage plays in their respective languages and in traditional folk forms.

2 National Folk and Tribal Dance Festival organized by the Government of India on

Of the play itself, I found it interesting that a writing partnership formed for an endless revision, should have released a script so littered with loose ends as to suggest a hasty first draft: but you don't make that kind of complaint on occasions of this kind.

"Nearer or later" says a phlogizer in Peter Nichols's *Englishman's Boy* (Broad Theatre Royal) and the characters line up and start talking about the state of England. "It is typical of the author's production that his own characters at that moment are already lined up. The play is partly a touchily affectionate salute to Michael's home town, but much more, another report on the state of the nation. How are we as a whole? Tucker Milner, a hill-country boy, is incongruously equipped with spotlights and stereo equipment, while the middle-aged Mo and his dotty mother are preparing for a family reunion. Before the siblings arrive we observe another ghost. Rich getting away to a decent TV set, and Mo taking her up with Benedictine before returning to her hell out of his dream for Dad's coffin is also on stage, a more addition to the farthings as another explains "All will here except Dad who died long ago".

The guests arrive. Hedley, a backbench Labour MP who is doing his damndest to pull his parents into the 1970s by bombarding her with drop leaves and

fluorescent lighting; and Quenna, hot from California and determined to take Mo back with her and away from his job. Report collections and antiquarian photography. Rich, in short, is would-be agents of change, and the play proceeds to demolish them and leave the remnants of Tudor Manor happily where they were to begin with. Coming from a writer of Nichols's usual penetrating intelligence, I found this exceedingly disappointing, though there are passages where you can interpret him anything, such as a marvellous evocation of old record-keeping. Mum's comment on the postwar Labour government "And we had to take enough, you gave us another five years shortage, and no American soldiers to take our minds off it".

Underlined by the history of *My Darling*, Anthony Shaffer has made yet another bid for the *Shelby* jackpot in a piece called *The Case of the Old Jerusalem* (Her Majesty's), wherein a country house murder mystery turns in the second act into a theatrical masquerade, and the corpse is doubled with the police inspector, (Hazel Bennett). The formula is one of maximum ingenuity and comic content and it takes very little time for passion to pass out with a pace that jolts character-response and comprehensible narrative in favour of poking fun at a form of entertainment as dead as Roger Ackroyd.

the occasion of Republic Day in which about 500 dancers participate.
January 21-February 25, 1983, New Delhi, India

EXHIBITION OF THEATRE POSTERS AND SET DESIGN PHOTOGRAPHS

The Indian Center of the International Theatre Institute (P - 14, New Central Market, New Delhi 110 001) seeks "exciting and representative" contributions from Australian theatres for display at these two exhibitions. Captions giving details of the production to which they relate, along with the name of the designer, will be appreciated. The posters will be exhibited in December 1979, and the exhibition of photographs of set designs has been extended to February 1980, at the Expo 86 site and extends outwards into the international and dispatch to India.
November 1979 and February 13, 1980, New Delhi, India

THE INTERNATIONAL CARL- MARIA-VON-WEBER COMPETITION FOR CHILDREN'S OPERAS

The administration of the Dresden Music Festival in the German Democratic Republic invites entries from composers of children's operas. This competition wishes to foster new operas of high artistic quality, which concern themselves with contemporary problems of children, in par-

ticular groups of 4 or 60 minutes length for children 4-8 years old; 2 or 120 minutes length for children 9-14 years old. Main as a creative basis, in his relationship to parents, to society, to the intellectual problems of our age should be presented in works whose subjects reflect the interests and experiences of young theatre-goers. The competition aims to widen the receptivity for children's operas which can be staged in a theatre without huge technical equipment. A jury will award three prizes of approximately A\$5,000, A\$3,000, and A\$2,500.

Address: Music-Department, Department of the State Opera, Julius-Gruener-Allee 27, 801 Dresden G.D.R.

January 22, 1980, Dresden, Germany
Telephone: 340000

FIRST BIENNIAL SCENOGRAPHY EXPOSITION

A major exhibit of current North American scenography and studio processes in scenery and costume design, will be held by the United States Institute for Theatre Technology at their National Conference at Glenwood Manor, Overland Park, Kansas. Representative contemporary designs from Broadway, schools, regions, and film and television, produced since March 1973 will be displayed.
March 13-15, 1980, Kansas, U.S.A.

CHILDREN'S THEATRE

Youth Performing Arts —Forcefeeding The Innocent?

By Geoffrey Brown

Up to a certain age children are fed their doses of the arts either at school through doing remakes which drag them to Christmas pantomimes, or through the channels of television at the behest of parents.

For the International Year of the Child, the Film and Television School has made a positive contribution by holding a national seminar, "Children's Choice" in late August. Well attended by both television personnel involved in children's programming and also representatives of those involved in the live performing arts for young people (in dance, music, puppetry, drama and music), there appeared to be positive and beneficial exchanges of ideas and possibilities for the development of both areas. I understand that financial support is now available on the same basis as for the arts for young people in the arts field and in the young people).

What has the International Year of the Child meant in some of the other areas of youth performing arts? A first outrage would seem to indicate that there has been very little direct and ongoing impact, and that most of what has occurred would probably have happened anyway. Certainly, the arts was not a major priority area for the various national and IYC committees, and neither were associated areas such as theatre or "innuendo" although the latter did set a national non-governmental sub-committee, "The Child in Play and Creativity" (although it would not like to embarrass the IYC by asking for a report on their activities).

Education, also, seemed to take a lessening on the ladder where health and welfare were the major concerns (not forgetting the successful attempts to establish the Child Accident Prevention Foundation). One does not wish to suggest that these concerns should be ignored, but perhaps there are other areas in an industrialised and affluent society

such as ours which are worthy of closer examination in terms of their overall effect on children.

The arts are currently seen as a vital and integral part of the child's education — at least until he or she reaches secondary school, while there are more important subjects to be learnt. Perhaps a continuing situation of unemployment may persuade the public to accept some changes in the education structure in this country.

No doubt this is where the "back to basics" or "forward to fundamentals" logic begins to apply, and, if so, then it is the responsibility of all those involved in the arts with young people, and perhaps of all those who are involved in the arts at all, wherever, with anyone, to make it quite clear that opportunities for expression and creativity are as basic to the education of the child as can be imagined, and must be encouraged and fostered from all quarters from the earliest age, and must never be allowed to be eroded from the influence of a growing child. The arts, like reading, drama, must not be forced on a child, but the educative environment must be such that they are seen to be a part of the range of choices available for children anywhere.

One fact that perhaps the IYC has been let slip away without fully taking advantage of its potential in this regard. The Reports of progress from IYC Committees read quite well, and are full of "art" projects, though many would have happened anyway, and are truly praiseworthy, are philosophies of the arts and children, or perhaps just using children as yet another vehicle for experimenting with techniques not really understood?

The Australian Youth Performing Arts Association in its hospital but naive promotion of the Kids-Train Project as a major national project for IYC, ran afoul of the difficulties inherent in such national programmes. AYPA has certainly learnt that all the money support in the world from federal and state government and non-governmental contributors and the like is no guarantee of hard work. However, the vast work involved in developing that project was not in vain, as another idea

method — the Innards Project.

This project, initially funded through the Office of Child Care as a result of negotiations over the Kids-Train has been happening all over the outback areas of Australia for the past few months. In each capital city, a small band of arts practitioners have gathered and subsequently travelled to remote and isolated corners of that state (by road, coming and by train) to take performing arts activities to isolated children, involving them in imaginative play, experiences to which they would not normally have access. Funded by a grant of almost \$100,000 by government bodies (arts, education, IYC committees, community development, etc) as well as such bodies as the School of the Air, Colleges of Advanced Education, the Arts Centre, etc, involving 14 visiting groups plus a permanent local resident artist, a total of about 150 people the period of a week to a month, this is a major project for IYC, for children and for Australia. From the IYC, AYPA has also gained more contacts in the areas of children's services at state and national level, and it is anticipated that more support will be available in the future, teaching arts activities in projects sponsored by these bodies.

Since it received successful funding in mid 1978, and thus has played an important position of an arts resource organisation for young people with a host office (land and staff) etc, AYPA has attempted to develop its role as an Information Resource Centre. It now publishes its own bi-monthly magazine, *Lookabout*, and has implemented Conson's "computerised contacts" system for producing up-to-date listings of all those involved in youth performing arts across Australia (and some from overseas), as well as address books to save time and money in the continual struggle to increase the lines of communication across the country.

Through its system of communication and dissemination of information, AYPA aims to be responsive to the

problems and needs of those working in the field and to thus develop projects to satisfy these needs. This can be a difficult situation, as ideas must be put forward and tested amongst as many of the people AYPAA represents as possible and it can be difficult to expect thoughtful and critical responses from busy people, especially if a lot of ideas are under consideration. The situation can also become simple "a lot of ideas and no action" as people's minds tend, and for any organisation such as AYPAA must not be seen to develop projects based on the thoughts of a small number of people, as it

"Field Study of Professional Theatre-in-Education" to be held over a 12-month period, is working to develop a network of contacts and resources in neighbouring countries of Asia and the Pacific and hopes to produce updated copies of its main publication - the Directory of Organisations and the Vespers Directory.

AYPAA is also concerned with representing the field to government and other bodies - representatives attend conferences, prepare papers and contribute other resources on a wide range of topics. AYPAA seeks to foster and create the most beneficial environment so

somewhat tensions. He admits that youth performing arts are not seen to be the forefront of the movement, but rather as a vital and integral part of the life of the child. AYPAA believes that back-up resources from an independent sector are currently necessary and valuable, as split out above. AYPAA has promised to do this without sapping the precious arts dollar from the practitioners themselves. It currently receives no in-service status support from the Office of Youth Affairs, but from the Australia Council and will continue to attempt to uncover and develop areas of support which will be of direct benefit to all



could therefore no longer claim to be an *representative*.

Since July 1, 1978, the main projects undertaken by AYPAA were the national tour of John and Sue Fien (reported in the February 1979 issue of *Theatre Australia*) and the development and implementation of the Inmate Project, not forgetting the introduction of *Parade* and the *Campaign System*. For 1980 AYPAA has successfully negotiated a Fellowship grant to enable expatriate Australian Richard Durrill, to return. His intended plans for a

enable youth performing arts in Tasmania. It is anxious not to lose the talent who may be unaware of what the role of the arts and young people may be whether they are government officials or leaders of industry and commerce but rather to encourage instances to be undertaken from all areas which may provide either original support to all those working in the field.

AYPAA feels that the area of youth performing arts is currently fragmented and patchy, and that overall support is

those involved in youth performing arts.

National AYPAA is continually responsive to ideas and criticism. Write to AYPAA, c/o Theatre Workshop, University of Sydney, 2006 022-6972 0554.

Geoffrey Brown has been National Consultant for AYPAA since mid 1978. He has a B.A. from the University of NSW, and was previously Administrator for the Fox Track Theatre, a Sydney-based Theatre-in-Education company.

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DANCE



By William Shoubridge

**One sees a Mob of
Metaphors
advance,
Pleas'd with the
Madness of the
mazy Dance
- Alexander Pope.**

For anyone who has ever read Rabel Brautson's *Shades for the Ballet* or Julian Braunschweig's *Ballet Scandinave* and rejoiced in the hard-fisted humour, the drama and the back-stage feckiness of the ballet world, last have thereon, the *Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo* would seem perhaps to be that world personified.

Everything is there, the pseudo-Russians, the opus, the power battles on stage and the word reifications that go to make up ballet (or operetta) life off our own stage. The sets are shabby or strident; the music badly performed (or in the case recorded) especially in *Swan Lake*; Act 2 and the costumes are outrageous when not dowdy.

It's all terribly reminiscent of a those strong entrepreneurial writers, many good examples of which have been seen in this country, country of quick buck entrepreneurs who went on patting off second-rate stuff with an enthusiasm of gullible public. What makes the *Trocks* so different is that all of this is a design, it is all a part of the image they want to present. The performances are tricky but they are



The Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo

endearing, for the performers are what they are and essentially no more.

What I like most about Les Ballets Trockadero is its good nature. Although it sends up modes and manners of the dance, it does so with wit and affection, and is never derogatory. The mockery and satire may be so closely observed as to be hard missing, but it is not bitter nor merciless. The *Trocks* are always true to their conceptual beginnings.

The *Trocks* are not music-hall knockabout comedians or artistic revolutionaries; knowing the dance for non being "learned", they are serious performers, well trained and skilled, who love, fear and respect the form of art they work in. The laughter they create is a healthy corollary to the executed manners of style, character and personality of dance practitioners and that is all. The fact that they love and know dance is exemplified by the fact that they parody the form by using the form and thereby enhance the art.

For my money the most sincere, artistic and cleverly (effectively) observed piece of satire on the entire *Trocks* programme was *Peter Aronson's Go For Broke*. It was of

course a send up of George Balanchine's *Concerto Barocco* and I enjoyed it not merely because I admire Balanchine's choreography but because in *Barocco* a true master of dance was satirized, not just the foibles of its practitioners or the exoskeleton of its stylistic framework.

The laughs start even before the dancing begins as the curtain rises on the sparse neoclassic Balanchine landscape of bare stage, black borders with blue eye and a lone, ornate, threadbare chandelier dangling from the flies. On stage is a bevy of horsey "girls" in black, govtags too much for Mr. B's "whitework" changing at the be in their capricious to get going.

There are all the thread points of Balanchine dance, the spiky fingers, broken wrists, daisy chains that trip the unwary, the mechanical "London Bridge" formed from arms, manically elaborate and jerky poses. It has an emphatic bump-and-burn with every matching dash and syllable of music upon parodying Balanchine's insistence that dance illustrates music.

The most outrageous codified rite from the *Le Corsaire* pas de deux and the

(Continued over page)

infamous *Pas de Quatre*

When it comes to *Le Corsaire* a split occurs; the dancing itself is done practically straight as pure Paganini you would see on any gala performance stage, but the attack is more frenetic, showmanship dominates, which makes it an amazing experience of these balletic surroundings we've been led to in Australia of late. The ballerina is determined to outshine her partner or at least to distract attention from him, anything he made while he is just as determined to outpounce and outperform his tries, languorous poses, flowing controls and all.

Le Corsaire carries on from a dramatic opening to a convulsive finale and leaves the audience stocken helpless with laughter, edily refreshed and reassured. The secret thoughts were had over the years about High Imperial Ballet Camp (especially in gala balls, and splits like this) have been led to rest at last.

There are other works in the Truck's repertoire that I would have liked to have seen again, like the Martha Graham take-off *Phaedra* (Moussouri) or that stupor hit of Jerome Robbins' *Dance of a Gypsy* (later, via Fanny and her piano baller). But the famous of parody lies in the shock of recognition, and Australian audiences (probably) have never seen Graham choreography or the Robbins masterpiece or any of their myriad and delightful spoofs.

Much more was not on Swan Lake Act 2 by audiences, the performers and the company itself. Personally I didn't want to because it felt overmuch on heavy staging and lampish conceits the same faults that dethroned both *Don Quixote* (the funniest thing about which were the curtain calls) and the ragged *Rosmonda's Revenge*.

Swan Lake however, while it ironically gazed the old war horse for most of the time, contained some genuinely hilarious moments, especially the dance of the little swans where one of them had to make great heavy footed jumps to keep up and the water where there was much skilful comedy made of the accidents of falling off points and covering up.

The central pas de deux that starred Nanci Taylor as the Swan Queen, though, was startling, not only because it reintroduced the Benno character from the original Russian *Swan Lake* (something that has been missing in the work's Western versions) but the dancing of Taylor herself was excellent as anyone's book.

The *Pas de Quatre* was again the more effective and funnier, because it was subtle and finely tuned. Those four prima ballerinas roped unwillingly together on stage danced exquisitely and earned the comedy on their waxy devotion,



Joan Vernon, Ross Philip and some of the Sisters. *Dance Company* in Murphy's *Glenn Gould*. Photo: Bruce Goss

delicate upstaging and the setting (a bathtub-will-get-you-in-the-way, ladies. So dollful was the characterization of these ladies, mistresses of Tagliero, Cenzo, Graun and Graun that one simply forget that these were real gender males dancing on points and that of course is the real secret of his masterful performing.

Pas de Quatre and moments in *Swan Lake* contained elements of such skilful technique that one wished that same genre's days, female ballerinas would watch the Truck with a view to self-improvement.

MURPHY'S GLIMPSES

Legend, Murphy's choreography the look at the world of Norman Lindsay was the work that was first prize at Ballet '78. And even, and even, then saved as a an unambitious piece of balletic Australian, these days it is looking rather dirty and outdated.

The title now strikes me as something of an escape hatch. Glimpses are all we got and in the final summing up, don't count up to much.

Lindsay's world in the sketches and paintings from which Murphy drew his inspiration never existed, of course, except when some galschool officer, but it was a dream world too rich to be anything like the pallid prose analysis of the pre-Raphaelites and too life-affirming to mirror the European decadent's catastrophes, despite the ghosts of Moussouri's character that haunt Lindsay's canvas.

What Murphy has captured wonderfully is the sense of exhilaration and wide-eyed

wonder the mere sensation that it is all happening in some recess of the mind, but the conjuring is ethereal and the drama skips along on the surface.

I can appreciate that Murphy has intended only a distillation of Lindsay's vision, a stream-of-consciousness pageant of icons and tropes to that whirling and eddies about the two flustered Victorian ladies (played as although as ever by Geoffrey Chabert and Robert Olney) but any real distillation of Lindsay would be more potent than this. Quite simply the streams of dance and even in the past two quality, our mastery is tarnished but left unimpaired, but wants to see them developed and a stream back but the movies come flicker on and off while the past is merely a couple of flicks and catches that evaporate into the forced finale.

The sketches could be put down to Margaret Netherland's worst *Reverend With a Katia* Browne holiday snap of the Dandies rather than a portrait. Nanci, who is more music to her or others that could be used to flesh the thing out. Nevertheless, Lindsay is not apologetic about itself and that deserves admiration. It is being danced with aplomb these days too.

SEQUENCE VII & SCINTILLATION

There is no such warning about Murphy's *Sequence VII*, though, a marvellously concise passage of movements that take their cue from the Benno (the solo of the same name).

The legendary choreography in this detour re-navigates the field of postmodern

and precise shapes. It is a study in contrasts and relations: bodies career in unison across the wide stage and then cohere into a tight sculptural Vagan-like web. Murphy treats his dancers' limbs as independent parts, discombobulating isolates and then weaves them into a single image.

He has deigned a neat, pure tracery of mathematical deployment on stage, but it is easy on the eye, almost fitful and never quite takes as long as it is in the chair.

The same choreographer's *Sanctuary* doesn't have quite as much going for it. The work travels against the elements of Salcedo's wonderfully somber harp solo. There is overmuch use of the what could be called Murphy large pattern (angled legs with flexed feet and bent arms wined into an off-center spiral) yet one does notice how the bottom parts pass from one moment to the next with small perturbations.

The corps dancing, however, looks swappy even in its extending shifts and shoves and an air of incongruous rearrangement seems to pervade these sequences. The one redeeming feature is the central male solo, danced with a fine nervousness by Leigh Chambers, who makes a quiet questioning delivery into the part.

My lasting impression of *Sanctuary* as its present performance is one of feigned tagging together of images, and it was a piece-of-wooden that was never meant to last.

Andre Teppe's *Fluore* will have an impact, but only of two bodies stepping and writhing together. This snappish duo is portrayed without emotion and the dramatic impact grows out of mechanics and music only. There are too many Mickey Mouse in the choreography by that I mean a bone-champing answer to every crash and bang in Carlos Chavez' sleek modernist score.

Fluore holds well together, it wastes nothing and the structure is clear, but this minimalist abstraction of all some *Wendell* has been said, especially when it comes off as so glad and several sets up as something less than what meets the eye.

ONE EXTRA

Kuo Tai-Chuan's *One Extra Dance* is a group states in its march into an anticipated generation of dance beyond mere dancing. Sometimes the company, which has subtle success, such as last year's *March Past*, a stirring look at the more and social problems of a migrant family within a cosmopolitan urban society like America's. Sometimes the success is only, half-baked, the arts and interests far exceeding the actual execution. I don't

think that Kuo Tai-Chuan is ever worried about pure dance technique in his works, however. He was far from a dancer in the Margate Barr Dance Drama Group, and Miss Barr's Graham-indebted philosophy believes that an exact dance technique isn't strictly necessary and can in fact be a hindrance.

Both Kuo Tai-Chuan and Margaret Barr believe that by losing a sense out of a reflexively and utilizing the philosophy (if not the technique) of some-amount and then coming closer to the "communion" of the great unthought, the work will somehow be more emotionally honest. Dance can of course absorb any such philosophy and indeed some scenes of the New Dance have had a whole system out of non-dance and even non-movement.

What distinguishes the themes of both these creators is its dramatic involvement. Miss Barr's most notable works *Three Songs From The Past* and *The Artist of Dreams* deal with human questions, while Kuo Tai-Chuan's are concerned far more with social issues.

Chan's latest work *Just Over The Horizon* is a whole act of appeal from the heart concerning the plight of the Vietnamese boat people.

The work starts innocently enough with a troubled young man (Chan) lying in bed listening to the evening news. Upon mention of the news that the Beatles have refused to perform together so and the refugees, something snaps within and a total wave of memories and regrets engulfs him. That, at least, is how I read it, it could just as well be the outrage and anger of any man of moral conscience.

With programmatic subtleties like President Nixon Over The Edge In Limbo, Vietnam and Above the Waterline, one senses that this nightmare of remembrance presents us with a modern day tale of the Medusa, a veritable maze all the more horrible by the fact that there are myriads of these "tales" and they are freely chosen as a means of escaping to freedom. As the young man throws himself about the stage in a perception of fear, anger and frustration directly in need of exorcism, the actual boat people struggle in the background, they run for their lives, clamber up rope ladders, are attacked and raped by pirates and left to sink below the waves.

It is a nightmare vision and one created in a moment of fury. But it is too immediate, too literal and attempts too much its immediate terms. I doubt that it will last the group choreography is confined, wordy and inchoate, although Chan has covered an excellently written one-act piece with his talent.

It is merely unfortunate that to be long so frantic and glaring down at his audience the work comes than audience rather than

leaving it sympathetic. I certainly hope the piece gets worked on with an aim toward greater objectivity.

KINE STAG.

The Company's performance of Carlo Gozzi's *King Stag* in the second half of the programme is a complete turn-around from such themes, but it is still a sample of the company's intention to extend dance terminology.

With Ron Crampton as director, Christine Kaitia as choreographer and Sam de Jong supplying the score, *King Stag* is a free adaptation of the somewhat delicate prompt present within Gozzi's play. The plot revolves around a comedic, magical conglomeration of mistaken identities, courtly intrigues, lyrical ensembles and diabolic misadventure.

It is the story of a king who has been given two magical secrets by a magical witch in punishment for his indiscretion has been transformed into a parrot. The first secret is a hair that laughs in the presence of a woman's disarming, the second is a thread that, once attached to one mortal, can interchange their bodies. Inside all this lies a host of bits of comedy, characters and stock situations that the performers "improvise" on.

The story itself is thin and threadbare but the resonances are many and deep, not that the dancers are concerned with that. They're flat out trying to act and sing and dance. The demands of the acting defeat them, and so does the dancing.

Crampton has elegantly marshalled the barefaced tale within his economic and effective act. The gesture and minimalist stage straight out of someone's comedy dell'arte less book, but I do wish he could have coached his performers in the rigors of stage speaking. As for the incorporation of differing disciplines, *King Stag* achieves nothing of the sort, it just attempts to knit them together.

Sam de Jong's minimalist, being widely out of period and dramatically opposed to the careful stylizations of Crampton's stage gesture, of down right disturbing at times. The same applies to Christine Kaitia's choreography, which is in effect a state of dance unrelated with the fabric of the play. The dance style is of a quasi-classical ballet technique which again is out of period. Gozzi's play was premiered in 1782, some before Carlo Bonin and Noverre got round to codifying classical technique.

King Stag was a brief venture and occasionally improving but it all left me rather with a feeling of a full stage production of the Early. Modern comedies of the 18th century. Gozzi's *King Stag* is a theatrical event.

OPERA



By David Gyger

Nationwide successes

Two enormously different works Richard Strauss' *Salome* and Gilbert and Sullivan's *Pastorale* were the final new offerings of the Australian Opera during its major winter season at the Sydney Opera House.

The *Salome* was very slow to get off the ground, but just about atoned for that through Marilyn Richardson's winning realisation of the closing scene. The *Pastorale* was a G and S revelation from start to finish, the production I'd been waiting for years to see and just about given up hope of ever encountering the one to convince thorough-going sceptics like myself that the Bay of operatic reality did warrant occasional introduction in the repertoire of a serious opera company.

Together they added up to an appropriate finale for a major Sydney season that undeniably had its moments but was far from an all-round artistic triumph. And even in the period under review, without any undue disrespect to the *Pastorale* and *Salome* of the national company, winners off the beaten track by the State companies in Queensland and Victoria provided at least as much artistic interest as the efforts of the Australian Opera.

Coupled with the Adelaide *Der Rosenkranz* I reviewed in these columns last month, they add up to a truly remarkable three-State effort to present different works of musical theatre in a single month — an effort which ironically excludes Sydney, where the country's largest potential audience for such prizes must

inevitably reside.

But even if some Sydney-ers will be gawking their teeth just now at what they have missed that has been vouchsafed those in other States they should be grateful for their blessings along more conventional lines. In particular, John Cox's marvellous new *Pastorale*.

This *Pastorale* was not, of course, altogether a sleeper, being based as it was on Cox's renowned production a few years back in London 1961, one can never rely absolutely on second-hand reports of productions one has not seen for even if the reports are accurate in themselves they may well not apply fully to a local recreation of an overseas original.

Yet hearing the enthusiasm which Cox, obviously still entranced for *Pastorale* expressed publicly on a couple of occasions before the premiere quite prepared me for the revelation that in this *Pastorale* lies G and S, such as most of us have never seen it before, at least as funny as usual, but quite devoid of the bawdy, overdeveloped traditional kind of G and S playing so entwined with tradition there is just about no scope left for anything but caricature.

Certainly the *Pastorale* is the most eloquent argument I have yet encountered for admitting G and S to the hallowed precincts of the repertoire of a fully

professional opera company. By comparison with it, the previous efforts of the Australian Opera in this genre seem even more feeble and unsatisfactory than they did at the time.

Cox seems to have cleared the decks for action when approaching *Pastorale*, by rejecting all the traditional G and S settings and looking at Gilbert's text purely on its own merits as the penetrating satire it is of 19th-century English society, and in particular the manners and rituals contrived by the Aesthetic Movement.

Visually, John Stoddart's designs apparently are meticulously true to the detail of the Aesthetic Movement dictums as to colour schemes, clothing style, and art objects accepted and rejected; but it is a major strength of this *Pastorale* that it requires of its audience no awareness of such dictums. It is instantly clear from the moment the opening curtain goes up on the 20 lavishly realised, of the chorus, all in green and gently flowing, breezy and arched in ludicrously overdone late romantic poses, that these misguided young aesthetes are doomed to fail the production of open-minded faith into their song. "Twenty years hence, we shall be 20 lavishly realised still."

And *Pastorale*, when she appears, is the unsophisticated milkmaid she ought to be in sharp contrast to the sophisticated, and



Charlotte Johnson (left), Shirley and Henry (and) Anthea Gorman (right) in *Pastorale*.

endowed with a north-country accent to emphasize her difference so any fool can see why the residents are so irritated that their idol the mock-pope Barnstone has spurned them in favor of her. And the contrast of the brash end of the soldiers' uniforms with the maidens' gowns lends point to their rejection on aesthetic grounds, and there are some marvelous reconstructions built into the sets themselves, such as the central pots perched atop a elaborately carved pavilion in the opening scene of Act II.

The new *Pastorale* is also blessed by some marvellously strong performances in the four central roles. It is no surprise that Dennis Olson (Barnstone) and Robert Glard (Kinsacchi) excel, but even in the acting department, in which both are always outstanding, there were signs that time had helped them to refine and focus their interpretations. And as a special bonus both were singing well above their own previous standards—particularly Glard, whose prior fun developed a most pleasing new warmth and beauty in the past year or so.

Rhonda Brown, as Pastorella, acted exceptionally well and sang ably, though still inclined to shrillness at the top of her vocal range. As Lady Jane Adragon lady part made it hard to see her acting, singing and emotional talent like actually plays the double bass on stage in this production, having studied the instrument in her training years. Heather Regg was a thorough delight. John Prough, George Ewert and Robert Eddie made a fine trio of block-headed military men, which is about all they are permitted by the text.

Mostly, this production was in the most capable hands of Geoffrey Arnold, who brought things together and kept them moving with just the right degree of sparkle to provide a most delightful evening in the theatre.

Richard Strauss' *Salome* is one of those operas which, capably done, can be the experience of a lifetime in the theatre. It has degenerated into a crashing bore given half the chance. Much of the trouble is inherent in the work itself, which demands particularly strong acting and singing at the very beginning in order to involve an audience which has had the benefit of no overture to set the mood.

Not in Harnoth's the entire past of the first third of the opera, unhelped anything very striking in the way of orchestral support. A lack of melody, that with a wildly dissonant, pulsating vocal line are the ingredients Strauss knew so well as the essence of his latest relationship with the princess who is on stage, comes from the dignity of accepting her over as a human being, let alone a potential lover. For this reason



Marchus (Richardson) (Salome) and Kinsacchi (Robert) in *Salome*



Richardus (Richardson) in *Salome*

extraordinarily beautiful, but in the ideal performance of this opera the interests are electrolytically dramatic situation carefully built up before she appears in the first place.

Many things about producer-designer Tom Lough's *Salome* theatre remind of his original concept hall *Salome* at the Sydney Opera House three years ago are better this time round, but one is not the placement of Narraboth and Herodias: the top who is apparently as related with Harnoth as Narraboth with Salome. In both versions, they are required to play out their opening scene way upstage. Let removed from the orchestra and audience and, in the case of the opera theatre version, so far behind the proscenium arch it would all but require superhuman vocal power just to be heard let alone to convey any very strong sense of dramatic involvement to an audience.

The original *Salome* who had the significant opening advantage of Robert Glard as Narraboth—a fine actor as mentioned above in the *Pastorale* context—was never more impressive vocal attributes. This year, *Pastorale*'s gain was undeniably *Salome*'s loss, for Gino Zancanaro had neither the vocal resources, nor the dynamic ones, to make a success of Narraboth.

Unfortunately the above problems

Narraboth is the toughest role to bring off effectively in this remarkable opera.

Salome herself, of course has some of the most gloriously melodic music with some of the most lush orchestral backing that Strauss ever wrote. She must convey to an audience the watching horror of the dramatic situation to make her own final downfall credible and at the same time sing with some extraordinarily demanding music which is at the same time

continued to get things off to an unsatisfactory start at both the performances of *Salome* I attended this season. Which was a pity, because after that things improved spectacularly.

The broad, diagonally descending, flight of steps around the audience provided a much more practical working area than the rather more tortuous concert hall set, the centre was more prominent this time round and insured a beautifully obvious lunge much aid with an opening through which Salome could drop her long ribbon of black cloth at the end of the Dance of the Seven Veils, presumably in the vain hope of humiliating Jokanaan with her performed undies following the disastrous failure of the more direct appeal to his sexuality. In itself, though, her dance was neither particularly sexy nor did it live up to its name. It was saved, though, by remarkable dramatic support from Gordon Wilcock's Herod, who slavered over her most effectively.

In fact, it would not be unfair to say that Wilcock was the great revelation of this *Salome*. His was a gripping characterisation, motivated almost to the very end by Salome's voluptuousness, only receding in horror at the last possible moment so as to make dramatic sense of his order to Kill That Woman. It was quite a major advance on Wilcock's previous work as a character, one might almost say, naively, simplistic, tender for the AG. And he sang very well indeed a number of notices better than his previous efforts with this company.

Margara Elkins provoked and slavered and attempted to lispick rather nicely too, appropriately complementing Wilcock in the uneasy marriage of Herod and Herodias and underlining the horror of Salome's behaviour through her unqualified approval. It was an effective dramatic touch after she had her chair moved closer so she could direct more insistently during the ritual of beheading, for her to grab the head on the other salver from the executioner to pass on to Salome.

And then there was Raymond Myers' Jokanaan, which was finally a real personal triumph in the fact of quite considerable chemistry. Myers is too small physically, and not large and noble enough of voice, so he easily and convincingly in this production, particularly on opening night, by an incredibly convincing mechanical echo effect when he was in the crotch. Despite all that, however, he managed to convey a real intensity of religious zeal combined with a physical intensity that made him quite credible as the prophet.

And Marilyn Richardson's Salome though insufficiently naive and girl-like at the outset, and not sufficiently intense of purpose during the Dance of the Seven



London Theatre Works: Phillip Lichfield (Antagonist) John Tabor (Ministry of Power) Lynne

Veils, achieved quite thrilling proportions at the musical heights of the final scene assisted considerably by some fine backing from the Elizabethan Sydney Orchestra under William Reid.

Brian Howard's new music theatre piece *Seven Furies*, using Louise Nower's excellent play as a jumping-off point, received an outstanding premiere production at Melbourne's Great Screen Theatre early in October.

In its music theatre version (I did not see the original play) *Seven Furies* is a powerful dramatization of the story of a mentally delicate 18th-century marabout named Ivan and his mentor Mordech, the man who through intrigue and fraud turned him to autocratic power and then manipulated him like a ventriloquist's dummy. These two enormously demanding roles were played in this production by Lynne Terrance and John Tabor respectively, and both — but particularly Terrance — scored considerably personal triumphs.

On first hearing, Howard's music was extremely atmospheric, appropriate to the dramatic context and not difficult to take for those with reasonable tolerance of the new and the different. It did not strike me as particularly memorable, but I was sufficiently impressed by the evening as a whole to hope quite genuinely to have the opportunity of experiencing the piece again in the near future.

Overall this was a fine effort by the Victoria State Opera and conductor Richard D'Ottoli to provide a worthy, credible setting for the two central

characters mentioned above. Thoroughly creditable performances came from all the supporting members of the cast, but particular mention must be made of the superb work of the dwarf Mark Colombari as Ivan's servant Peter as well as the convincing if brief images of Barbara Sambell as the warlock Phrygia. Ah, pretending to be the long-lost female of coral blood, his agreeing very unthinkingly according to the rules of Marlowe when it became clear he was the power behind the throne.

The other major regional production of the month, again well off the beaten track though the work itself is nearly 50 years old now, was the Queensland Opera Company staging of Stravinsky's *The Rake's Progress* at the AGHD Theatre, Brisbane.

I had never expected to encounter as successful a realisation of this piece on stage as was managed by director Michael Beauchamp on loan from the national company, with generous assistance from Peter Cooke's designs. Gregory Dargatzis was a most effective Rakoczi, with no small assistance from Louise Nower as Anne Trulove and Paul Neal as Nick Shadow.

The opening night Brisbane audience seemed not to know, by and large, what had hit it (I nearly crained, but by the end a veritable proportion of it was applauding with genuine enthusiasm — so small achievement for an production of this piece, let alone one north of the Baffin-Peterson line).

David Gyger is editor of *Opera Australia*.

Don Giovanni — courageous attempt

By Derek Moore Morgan

Opera Viva's *Don Giovanni* at Perth's Octagon Theatre underscored again the yawning gap between professional amateur operatic standards.

Mozart's elegantly-turned phrases represent a hard and cruel exposure for singers and instrumentalists alike, and the participants in this performance could take heart from the thought that the true Marquisian flavour and magic are both of them rare commodities — pearls without price.

All this composer's serious operatic notes are furnished in part with mischief and depth, and his women wronged and indeed his upright characters in general all too easily lapse into unconvincing lay figures.

We needed to hear more of the wit from Carlo Jassi as Donna Anna, though she produced effective sounds at the top of her range.

Christopher Waddell as the Don was physically active, jumping like a cat on hot

bricks at times, but he hardly came to terms with the anatomic side of Giovanni's complex make-up. He needed to project his singing further in order to convey authority.

Barry Preece as Leporello had a much simpler task, but his buffa part can't get by on acting alone, and his vocal colour was somewhat unidiomatic.

The 18th century gulf between masters and peasants may have been capable of being bridged by seduction, but it was a hard reality on other wits. Meredith Williamson was suitably cast as the young and innocent Zerlina, while Rosewood Luky conveyed considerably frustration and uncertainty in her comic partner Masetto.

As surely one of opera's most quick-fec characters, Komrad Marquisaria's Commendatore needed much greater projection in the same scene. This crucial point of the opera was deprived of its proper impact in spite of the presence of a monument of imposing proportions.

Necessarily, I suppose, much of the production seemed to be mounted on wheels for easy transportation, unfortunately they tended to destroy much of the charm. Massed flickering candles effectively suggested a brilliant ballroom evoking suitable awkward wonder from the company.

The music had a fairly homogen-

ous tone which I felt to be out of character for the sobriety and as critical spotlight had the masked trio somewhat puzzled at one point. I wondered how the Don's boots went on so easily until I realised that they were complete with spurs. The suggestion of a mare was cleverly contrived and well used.

Ken Campbell-Dodson as director and designer had a mammoth task under restricted conditions, but things moved along well in general. A greater sense of tension and continuity between numbers needed to be generated at some crucial points.

John Hind directed a roughly 50-piece string wind orchestra (led by John Pokorny) from the harpsichord, which he played with skill. There was a lot of pleasant clarity from this small orchestra, but the extra punch of trumpets and drums was sorely missed at climax points from the overture onwards.

The advertising described this as "a daring production" but I found it hard to see why, apart from Giovanni and Anna struggling physically on a very low-angled balcony, and the Don's hairy chest revealed by a somewhat knee-cut shirt.

Nonetheless this was a courageous attempt to scale the heights and despite of the fascinating spin personality operating in Mozart's ill-defined woman's land between scene and buffa.

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FILM



By Elizabeth Riddell

Just out of reach

Owing to the sensitive and arbitrary regulations of the Australian cinema industry it is not going to be easy for the public to view any locally made films that are not of feature length. The movie houses seldom find a slot for them (or the totally understandable reason that they can acquire everything they want to fill in the first half of a programme for nothing). That is, tourist films, government-made films, commercial pulls.

Which leads us to *Just Out Of Reach* a film by Linda Bagg which moved getting an airing at the Bate Theatre.

It is showing at the Cinemakers Cinema (211 Paterson Lane) (old Wolstanton St) Sydney City for a six week season until November 11 along with *Can Man Hears* and *the Others* and *Mario Jones* (which took out the prize in the fiction section of the Greater Union Awards at the Sydney Film Festival).

Just Out Of Reach is about a girl named Cath who never tries to control suicide (and will no doubt try a third time) and may even succeed not because of any great tragedy in her life but mostly because of her disposition and her inability to tell with the punches.

Cath has aspirations she can't formulate, a distrust of the world and her awareness. Her concentration is on a short time "she makes those true plans and assertions - "what is life all about?" and "there must be something more to life than this" - which are quite genuine quite agonising. Because she is so pretty, so dis-informed, so full-bodied - who is lured at

18" - and is spared in a film that has the most homely, simple materialistic attitude to life, in fact a negative, grudging attitude to work and pleasure, her frustration expresses itself in a continual challenge. "Look at me," she cries, but after a while they don't look.

I suspect that Linda Bagg, who wrote the film as well as directing it, found Cath more attractive than will the average audience (if there is such a thing). In fact it is lucky for the film that Linda Bagg, who plays Cath, is such a lovely beauty and is able to give the character more charm than it would have if encountered, say, in one's own family. Linda Bagg has a real future. I hope producers and directors in the Australian film field will find this film. They may have forgotten her attraction and talent in a rather role as Chris Blain's odd's girlfriend in *Two Strays*.

Just Out Of Reach is fairly tightly written. The best scenes are between Cath and Mike, played by Sam O'Sullivan with infinitely more skill and sympathy than was apparent in *My Brilliant Career*. But

then the character in *My Brilliant Career* is called a stereotype to begin with.

The roles of Cath's parents, English emigrants, are played by Marion Vaughan who has an exceptional talent for playing sullen, delinquent men, and Jack Farr. The photographs, by Russell Hand, have earned him a place as a finalist in the cinematography section of the Australian Film Awards, which will have been announced before you read this. The film itself is a finalist in the fiction section.

The other two films, original and sympathetic in conception, in the case of *Mario Jones* (not a black comedy, directed and partly scripted by Sonia Holman, in the case of *Can Man Hears* and *the Others* and *an appreciation* of being human and also directed by Stephen Wallace) have been reviewed earlier in these pages. If comparisons have to be made these two are unexceptional while *Just Out Of Reach* conforms to a pattern, but the three support each other and deserve the seasons they are getting at the Cinemakers.



Linda Bagg as Cath in *Just Out Of Reach*

BOOKS

Richly theatrical — four new plays

By John McCallum

Yours for Everybody by Richard Dumas, pp 175, \$15.95.
The Man from Woodstock by David Roberts, pp 128, \$12.95.
Shadows by Robert Dumas, pp 128, \$12.95.

Breaker Morant by Geoffrey Blainey, pp 128, \$12.95.

The Ship's Hounds by Peter Gidley, pp 128, \$12.95.

When John Norman's dramatic output consisted of *Alfred Hamers*, *Edward and Anne*, *Lower*, extensive theatre fans in England New York, New York, London, he will no doubt be hailed as a Major New Playwright, and rightly so. Unfortunately for his reputation with the public he does not seem to be analysing the usual milieu of typical Australian characters, or exploring the cultural social origins of their behaviour. So the playwrights who want to be playwrights rather than wage plays, the bureaucrats who want to please their fellows in the Australian Cultural Centre, the critics who don't want their critics threatened, and the directors who don't want to fall out with their actors by having an interpretation, must put their own Act, they did an P. White. I'll leave me. The audience should get a better out of it.

The play is so rich, theatrical that everyone who reads it will become a director, and have their own version of the material. It is not based around character or action, although has those, but around a series of images. Like a Greek tragedy, there is a tension between its formal precision and its wild ambiguous theatricality which makes it one of the most exciting and thought-provoking plays ever written in Australia.

In *Paraguay*, the totally irrational Paraguayan has returns from France with a wife who has divorced herself in European High culture. They set about building Opera Houses and starting wars.

Both of which activities destroy the primitive humanism and barbaric substance of their country. One level is an allegory of cultural imperialism on another a series of different visions united only by their inappropriateness to the harsh impossibilities of the world.

This is a magnificent play and particularly important because it is so sophisticated in its form. In the Anglo-Saxon tradition so much emphasis is placed on oral tradition that a director of

stage reality come to depend on improvisation. Norman shows that the relationship between the actual world and the world on the stage can be more complex than that.

I am not getting well, but *The Man from Woodstock* is another superb play. Donagh Hewitt has always been popular with teachers and students, but to her richness has now been added a clarity and immediacy of purpose which should land on the basis of the Perth production will make her popular with audiences as well.



The play is about life in a small WA town east of the rubber pond, told from both sides of the tracks. There is a painful joyful side to the community life and a cheerfully bizarre story side.

The whole play is theatrical, not only in such that in the images it makes of life in the WA wilderness. At the end of the night and the day got married in a gay informal theatrical comic conversational setting together. The very anticlimax of which leaves a serious aftertaste. A moving theatrical pair present the language of *Ardenhouse* and the legal here gets so involved in the story that he virtually kills Othello himself.

The Man from Woodstock is another Australian play. It is a celebration of a particular small town childhood, but it does not rely simply on the audience's recognition of pastoralist myths. It doesn't have the anthropological material of much self-consciously "Australian" playwrighting. The play with its energetic structural daring, theatricality communicates its feeling for life increasing that feeling on stage not allowing an all consciousness to represent it. As with *Norma*, although the means and the ends are so different it is in the form which is the direct link with life, not a comfortable life with some sociological content. It's like the difference between saying "I feel full of love life" and dancing.

This success in a range of forms that is not supposed to be available in the box in *Norma* and Hewitt's work, and the way

forward for Australian drama. When we come to be embarrassed by style, when we can accept our *Alma Harris* and not make them feel guilty for stylistic extravagance, then we will have the beginnings of a sophisticated culture. And at least part of this is accepting the cosmopolitan influences which our preoccupation with *Realism* has led us to ignore.

In the meantime the search for great Australian heroes continues. Two plays from Edward Arnold, already well known for the productions are Kenneth Ross' *Breaker Morant* and Peter Gidley's *The Ship's Hounds*. In the tradition of Neil Kinnear, King O'Malley, James Hardy Vane, William Chabry, Daniel Mann, Nelly Maitland and others we have further candidates for heroic heroes we can all identify with and feel sorry for. The supposed Australian material in *Breaker Morant* (popularised in the ABC's *A Play in The Bush*) written by a relative newcomer to the country, Michael Corry is part of it. The previous heroes we write about like *Mark Twain*, *Laurel and Hardy*, *D. H. Lawrence* don't have that problem.

According to Ken Ross *Breaker Morant*'s main problem was that he was shot in a lot of underwear, self-writing poem "Guns! Herod the subject of *The Ship's Hounds* was a self-writing poem himself. They are both rather unattractive characters, and that seems to be the point of making them heroes. *Breaker Morant* communicates the subject in a moving courtroom drama ending in the long appeal and the last words (apparently factual but as more convincing for that) "Shoot straight on, bastards, and don't make a mistake of it." It is a well constructed, deeply involving account of a man one doesn't really want to know. (And I say that as one who knows about and suffers what they said about Douglas Norman's *Realism* at the Melbourne Olympics.)

Not being a Melbourne I cannot understand why *The Ship's Hounds* ended at the ABC as *Breaker Morant* did. It is a lovely energetic and beguiling look at a splendid, naive, failure from the dark regions of Australian literature of the 19th century. Here was a man with ambitions who let England impress him, unknown and with a failed marriage and came to the Colony, and remained just that. He gave a series of lectures at Mechanics Institutes and "Schools of Art" on "The Causes of Success in Life", a subject about which there is plenty to say, must have been very lively. Barry Gidley's play is full of rich irony and splendid comic absurdity and deserves to be tried again.

GUIDE

ACT

THEATRE

ACT ARTS CENTRE (06 476 7111)

412 Timor Performing Arts programme

1-5 November

PLAYBOI 98 (06 64580)

Josephs *Lulu Blau* by George Knebel with Robyn Archer director 1st November-2-17 November

Immersion by Roger Pulvers director Roger Pulvers, with Will Gluck Howard Stanley and Robert Stephen From 20 November

FOR LIME THEATRE COMPANY

Play to be advised 27 November - 1 December

R110 HIGH SE THEATRE WORKSHOP (07 87811)

Japan Company *The Foggy Mirror* Yumiko Arai, Waka E Tanaka Scholastic the ACT

Women's Theatre Group *Three Russian* by Sylvia Plath Alison Marr From to David Selbourne

DANCE

CANBERRA THEATRE (06 76601)

Australian Dance Theatre *Halkonnen* by Nigel Tiffin and Jonathan Taylor 8-10 November

OPERA

CANBERRA THEATRE (06 76601)

Canberra Opera

The Rite of Spring by Stravinsky

CONCERTS

ACT ARTS CENTRE (06 476 7111)

Dissonata House

Baroque Trio *Capella* 1-5/11/91

4 November

CANBERRA THEATRE (06 76601)

Hilsum Quartet, *Donna Barrios* 1 November

Errol Buddle Quartet *Kash* 1-17/11/91

Quartet *Contemporary Jazz* concert 28 November

For more contact Margaret Halfon at 3661

NSW

THEATRE

ALIBION COMPANY (066 2901)

Closed for alterations

ARTS COUNCIL OF NEW SOUTH WALES (02 557 6611)

School Tours 485 David Johnston metropolitan area until 16 November

South Coast from 18 November

Woe 1st & 2nd childrens play for infants and primary, Hunter and North Coast throughout November

Adult tours *Woe* 1st & 2nd written directed and starring Brendan Jacka until 18 November

The White Road commences 4 November

CTO R1 HOUSE HOTEL (069 4202)

Unford Street Taylor Square

Single In The Single by Rick Mann and Malcolm Franklin director Malcolm Franklin music Sandra Redgrave with Susan Sachs Susan Aspinall Chris Gullip, Kurt Jensen and Di Hartman Throughout November

ENSEMBLE THEATRE (028 9277)

Chapin Tim by Neil Simon director Helen Gordon with Leri Kesterman Elaine Flanagan Suzanne Hensley and Georg Redford from November New production commences late November (phone theatre for details)

FRANK STRAITS (021 5761 98)

THEATRE (021 5761 98)

Frank For The Moment a musical revue from the late of the 1950s to today with Noel Douglas Barbara Wyndon Gail Meade Neil Brown and Helen Jones director George Gordon Throughout November

GENEVA THEATRE (021 3411)

Music to the Contrabass by T S Eliot director Brian Donohue with Denis Allen Michael Barnard and Michael Pentecost Commences 3 November

HFR WORKS (021 5761 98)

Ann the musical director George Martin with Wayne Gordon Jill Perriman Nannie Hayes, Kit Hutton Anne Gough and Kevin Johns Throughout November

HUNTER VALLEY THEATRE COMPANY (26 2526)

Joseph by Christopher Hampton director Peter Hareley with Robert Alexander To 18 November

KIRIBITI (021 5761 98)

Kiribiti Basil Mober's *Paul* The *Harvey* film by P P Cannon director Richmond Young music Adrian Morgan with Patrick Wood Marge McLean Jane Hamilton Paul Chubbard

Ros Hobson Throughout November
LES CURRIE PRESENTATIONS
(188 3676)

Modern Music Theatre programme of
thematic music devised by Michael
Fauland for infants, primary and
secondary. Throughout November

Wile Jackson, traditional Irish music for
preschools, infants, primary and
secondary schools North Coast until 16
November

MARIAN STREET THEATRE
(498 1666)

Series by William Gibson director,
Alvin Duncan with Russ Gibson and
Paul Mayberry Commences 1 November
MUSIC BOX THEATRE (82 3179)

Symphony Centre Dramatists
Sisters, a musical play written by Terry
O'Connor and Ken Moffat director, Terry
O'Connor with Kim Hardwick, Lucy
Charles, Merrill Patten and Jill Elrod
14-24 November

MUSIC HALL THEATRE
RESTAURANT (909 8222)

Love is the Gift written and directed by
Stanley Walsh with Alexander Hay, Tim
Pock and Linda Cooper Throughout
November

MUSIC HALL THEATRE (877 6382)

Run Amok, a new comedy by John
McKellar and Ross Fraser director, Bill
Orr with Ross Fraser Throughout
November

NEW THEATRE (519 1401)

Arms and the Man, by Alan O'Casey
director, John Armstrong

NIMROD THEATRE (699 5606)

Uptown, Revised by Harold Pinter
director, John Sumner with Flawbach
Alexander Neil Furpatrick, Edward
Hepple and John Stanton Until 11
November

On the Verge by Ben Bailey adapted
from the Strindberg books directed by
George Whalen, with Jon Blake John
Clayton, Ben Crooke, Vanessa Garner,
Norm Hawthorne, Robert Murray, Barry
Dine, Geoffrey Rush, John Suttle and
Kerry Walker Commences 27 November

Domesticus, Purgatory, Hope by Margie
Robson, Not the Natives! Beckett and Little
Milkmen Clients One by Alexander Baro
director, Ron Horler with John McGregor
and Helen Morse Throughout November

NSW THEATRE OF THE DEAF
(157 1204)

School tours throughout metropolitan
area. At Home is Don Doherty Auditor
primary schools and Avenue Road
auditorium, Don Doherty for secondary
schools. Both directed by Ron Watson with
Nola Collins, Margaret Davis, David
Frederick, Colin Allen and Bryan Jones

OPT 5 THEATRE GROUP (919 5145 after
hours)

Amazig House Auditorium, College St,
Pymbleton by George Bernard Shaw

director, Colleen Clifford, with Michael
Recher and Barbara Marcus Throughout
November

PLAYERS THEATRE COMPANY
(91 7311)

Reed's Park Theatre
Programme unenclosed - contact theatre
for details

269 PLAYHOUSE (329 8804)

Their Fabulous Years 1991-2001 created
and devised by John Howett based upon
one of the original 500 music shows
director, John Howett with John Howett
Louise Howett, Bill Young, Jane
Hamilton, Doug McGrath, Peter
Parkinson and Jenn Ogle Throughout
November

PUB THEATRE (93 8445)

Doc Why Hurd!
The Simple Show director, Don Suggart
with Michael Ross, Sanga Lulu, Lynette
Woodland, Anthony Mason and Terry
Barnes Mondays throughout November

Q THEATRE (947 21 5718)

Shaw's Told by Doherty For adapted by
Max Hlland director, Kevin Jackson with
Ron Hackitt, Alan Bell, Peter Kingston,
Gale Anderson and Bill Conn At
Barrabrown Town Hall throughout
November

Beauvoir, Revised by Kevin Beorch,
David Mason Cox, and Max Hlland
director, Max Hlland with Mark
Bentley, Robin Jellis, Mary Raine,
Darril Wilson, David Wheeler and
Graham Lowndes At Perth from
November

RHYTHMA TRUCKING COMPANY
(909 25 2852)

Our Asia One The Caravan New Unit
17 November

SEA MICH. CENTRE (492 8555)

York Theatre,
Dorothy Fido One with Roba Arthur
Commences 21 November

SHOPFRONT THEATRE FOR
SOLING PEOPLE (589 9448)

Even drama workshops on Saturdays
10.30 including playbuilding, mime,
dance, sculpture, puppetry, design, radio
and video

SPEAKEASY THEATRE
RESTAURANT (562 7442)

Reed's W directed by John Fishburn with
Kate Furpatrick, Michael Atkins and
Donald McDonald Throughout
November

SYDNEY THEATRE COMPANY
(899 9322)

Drama Theatre S.O.H.
The Foreman John by Carlo Goldoni,
director, John Bell with Dora Fargyie,
Tom Sheldon, Jennifer McGregor and
John McLennan Throughout November

THEATRE ROYAL (271 6117)

The Don After The Don by Brian Hayes
director, Frank Basham, with Deborah
Kerr, Andrew McFarlane, Patricia

Kennedy, Gordon Glenwright, Diana
Smith and Lynette Curran Throughout
November

THE AUSTRALIAN BALLET (2 0388)

Opera Theatre S.O.H.
Don Quixote choreography by Nanyer,
based on Prope, music by Menkus
arranged by John Lamberty 7 to 27
November

Arme Karmine choreography by
Peelebach music by Tchaikovsky
Commences 10 November

OPERA

SYDNEY SYDNEY OPERA COMPANY
(94 5988)

Mass Hall Conservatorium Of Music
Fidelio by Beethoven in English, produced by
Paul Kelly, musical direction Andrew
Greene with Amanda Phares, Glenn
Windsale, Gary May, Lisa Trevelyan
and Sylvia Kiefer 11-19 November

CONCERTS

REGENT THEATRE (91 6967)

The Real Army Choir, song and dance
ensemble Until 1 November

The Debbie Reynolds Show between 3-17
November

For reviews contact Carole Long on
317 1200

OLD

THEATRE

ARTS THEATRE (76 2144)

Reed's Jansen by, Clifford Odys,
director, designer Jason Savage, with Ray
Heming and Pam Hyde-Morris 10
November

Reed's by The Play by, Neil Simon
director, Christine Ellis, with Kenneth
Delbecq, Jim Grech, and Debbie
Whitman from 15 November

REI MAJESTY (221 2777)

Reed's by, Bernard Shaw producer

Kennedy, Gordon Glenwright, Diana
Smith and Lynette Curran Throughout
November

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Whitman from 15 November

REI MAJESTY (221 2777)

Reed's by, Bernard Shaw producer

DANCE

THE NITE BOY AT 174-6266
The Revolution Butler 2-3 November
Some One gave Me 24 November

For tickets contact the director/office on
 (06) 67 4470

VIC THEATRE

ACTORS' THEATRE
Across the Joshua Desert Sat 2.30pm
ABENAKIM THEATRE (044 3828)
Drumming Musical Theatre John Finn for
 Diana Schubert 1.30 November
AIRNA THEATRE (04 6667)
Plays in performance touring schools. *The*
Mothers of Brenne (drama primary)
Abraham and the Golden Apple (upper
 primary), both by Eric Gray, writer in
 residence

AMN COUNCIL OF VICTORIA
 (039 4155)

Phylax Gerni *Puppet Culture* Touring
 V to 10 November
AUSTRALIAN PERFORMING
 (0624 6777)

From Fingers Janet Theatre *Joshua*
John Finn by Ian Cornel director Nana
 Ngik with Robbie McGeer Terry
 Diamond, Evelyn Krup, Di Duncanson,
 and Ian Cornel

COMEDY THEATRE (064 4996)
The Gas Game by D L Cahern director
 producer Peter Williams with Ruth
 Crackland and Ron Maddock
CREATIVE ARTS THEATRE (077
 077 4056)

Community based theatre working in
 schools, libraries and community centres
 (117 144)

FLYING TRAPPEZ CAFE (01 7271)
The Famous Flying Trapper Christmas
 Show

GAY NINETEENS MUSIC HALL
 Gooling, Friday and Saturday only
INDOIA THEATRE FOUNDATION
 (03 7843)

Plashes *Mr Roper* Show by Frank
 Hatherley director Graeme Hatherley
 designer Peter Craggan-musical director
 Ray Symons, choreographer Betty
 Ponder with Haze Spence, Evelyn
 Krup, David, Robinson, John
 Patterson and John D'On
Just by Joe Director director Karla
 Mueller

HER MAJESTY'S (065 3211)
Old New Company *Handker* by
 Shakespeare with Derek Jacobs
LANE LAMAR (019 6226)
The Cane Moss (contemporary)
Epiphany Cahaner *Tues-Sun* from 10.00pm
LA MAMA (180 4594)
Ground Rules and *Three Strips* by Ian
 Rado director Malcolm Robertson 1-11
 November

The Arthur Farrow street theatre 30-31
 November A series of performance and
 musical events details to be announced 15
 November - 2 December

MELBOURNE THEATRE COMPANY
 (054 6000)

Russell Street Theatre *Marquise* by
 Harris Oakley director Bruce Miles,
 designer Larry Entwistle with Carol
 Harris, Max Gillies, Matthew King and
 Sean Sully To 17 November

Once at Cuckoo by Mary O'Malley
 director Ray Lander Special return
 season from 23 November

Abraham Theatre *Traveling North* by
 David Williamson Musical production
 director John Bell, designer Ian
 Robinson with Frank Wilson and Carol
 Ray

Athenium 2 *Model* by Shakespeare,
 Initiatory Production director John
 Sumner with John Walton, Jane Lloyd and
 Simon Chilvers 5 November - 15
 December

Also Youth classes, School Theatre
 groups, and Curtain Up

OLD MILL Geelong (018 6654)
Drama Centre of Deakin University,
 Regular Evening productions

PILGRIM PUPPET THEATRE
 (038 6650)

Comic Strips and *Thang women* and
 directed by Ben Cooper

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 Multi cultural puppet theatre with Mogg
 the Cat and Friends Touring schools and
 community centres

PRINTS THEATRE (062 2815)
Thane To Rise

TICKET AND JOHN'S THEATRE
 (04 665 1754)

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 Roberts, Vic Gordon and other guests

DANCE

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 (073 6085)

International folk dance and now
 Australian work touring schools and
 community centres

CONCERTS

PALACE THEATRE (054 0637)
Banana Army Song and Dance Company
MAJOR AMATEUR COMPANIES
Banan Theatre Group (062 1082)
Clinton Theatre Group (078 1102)
Hendberg Rep (48 2262)
Malton Theatre Company (211 0620)
Pumpkin Theatre (42 6277)
Williamson Louis Theatre (528 4267)
 (1812 Theatre (796 8624)

For tickets please contact the appropriate
 tel 781 7777

WA THEATRE

HAYMAN THEATRE (080 7626)

The Man At The Moon Chroma
 pantomime written and directed by Tony
 Sachis 24 November - 8 December

HOLT IN THE WAT (181 3405)

Seasonal Conductor by Robert D
 MacDonald director Colin McCall To
 16 November

Our First Our the Cuckoo New
 dramatised by Dale Worsman director
 Edgar Morrell 6 November - 22
 December

NATIONAL THEATRE
 Perthshire (325 1500)

Little Peter by Lilian Helman director
 Edgar Morrell To 17 November

Goshw director Raymond Ormrod 22
 November - 22 December

RIHAI THEATRE (081 0557)

Arise by Roger Hall director Don
 Mackay To 24 November

WA ARTS COUNCIL
 Touring programme: *CATs* (children's
 theatre) - 4 Cat in The Hatland And
 Cat We Me (yrs 10-15) To 19-30
 November

OPERA

WA OPERA COMPANY
 Malton (081) by Phoenix musical
 director Alan Asher producer Giuseppe
 Bismarini To 24 November

CONCERTS

ARC CONCERT PROGRAMME
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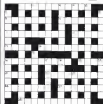
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Answer

- 1 A star with character (11)
- 2 He's backened in moral (7)
- 3 Four pointed in the boy is presented (7)
- 4 Enchanted an altar for the pabbles (9)
- 5 Heavenly bodies low at two points (4)
- 6 Quaker of deservies in a straight nose (3)

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- 14 "Woods" must be "J. K. Galt" (10)
- 15 Religion's a point beyond follows in religious editions (10)
- 16 Murder victim hunted down in a bed (10)
- 17 Family remains spotlight, contained (10)
- 18 Two gone (hardly) in the produce (10)
- 19 Last girl found in. But then, after 3.00 (7)
- 20 Plaster, for example, the head of the "Shah" (10)
- 21 All of these reveals (7)
- 22 An ambiguity (14 7)

Down

- 1 E. E. Perry sculpture remodelled the company (5 10)
- 2 I'll pin the blame, my dear (10)
- 3 Went too far and turns a (7)
- 4 Down side carry over (7)
- 5 Suggest a class friend (10)
- 6 Jammed under water but still a sound (10)
- 7 Device model could be, a down girl (10)
- 8 Unusually noted in using the international American journal (10)
- 9 "To ask the hard is simple" (10 11 August) (10)
- 10 Scores a hundred lights (10)
- 11 Calm achieved through a very quiet run (7)
- 12 There's nothing in the red leader to me, but that's impossible (7)
- 13 The farthest away the most luxurious (10)
- 14 Round head with, for the girl (10)

The last cartoon story drawn on "Newcastle" fish will mean, and mark the subscription in 74. Last month's winners: The winner of last month's Crossword was Mrs. Carol Margaret Gledhill, NSW.

